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NORTH OF THE LIMPOPO

AFRICA SINCE 1800

Ken Smith

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Preface

North of the Limpopo: Africa since 1800 started out as a revision of *Africa north of the Limpopo: The imperial experience since 1800*, which first appeared in 1985 and which has enjoyed a measure of acceptance in a number of colleges and universities as an undergraduate textbook. Long before the authors embarked on the revision, it was clear that a number of structural changes would have to be made. The proliferation of works on Africa since the preparation of the original book in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including the multi-volumed *Cambridge history of Africa* and the *Unesco General history of Africa* as well as a myriad of monographs and research articles, made this a foregone conclusion. But the authors had further decided that the emphasis on 'the imperial experience' should be discarded. *North of the Limpopo: Africa since 1800* reflects these changes.

Significant alterations have been effected at both ends of the time scale. The section on events before 1800 has been strengthened considerably, so much so that serious thought was given to the possibility of omitting the words 'since 1800' from the title. In the end it was decided not to do so, as the bulk of the work still deals with events after 1800. At the other end of the scale, *North of the Limpopo* does not end with the passing of the formal 'imperial' era, but goes beyond this to take in the situation in independent Africa after the withdrawal of the colonial powers.

The emphasis is no longer on the 'imperial experience', on European motives and experiences. In part 1 there is a fairly strong focus on the development of trade and trading relations in Africa, and throughout the book both authors have striven to achieve a balance between European activity and African initiatives and responses in Africa.

The new book also differs from the old one in that its approach is more thematical than chronological. However, bearing in mind that the majority of the students who will use the book do not have ready access to libraries and other works, it was not possible to take this too far. Thus while trying to draw certain threads together to form themes which will make the history of this vast continent over a period in excess of two centuries more intelligible, the authors were constantly aware of the need to provide sufficient detail to ensure that students could follow the chronological course of events as a backdrop to the study of the themes.

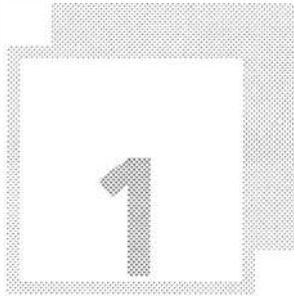
Part 1 of *North of the Limpopo*, which takes the tale of Africa to the end of the partitioning period, and which almost coincides with the end of the nineteenth century, was written by Ken Smith. F. J. Nöthling has written part 2, which deals with events in the twentieth century. Although there is one title to the book as a whole, it is in effect two separate books within the confines of one cover. The two authors did not work closely together and little attempt was made to introduce uniformity as between themes and approaches. *North of the Limpopo* reflects the thinking of two very different minds on the history of their respective periods. The authors regard this as a strength in the book rather than a weakness, and the decision to allow each author to choose his own approach was a deliberate one, which it is hoped will help to sharpen the critical faculties of students instead of presenting them with a single 'authoritative' approach and its attendant dangers of 'tunnel vision'.

One thing has not changed. Like the old book, the new one has been designed as a textbook for undergraduate students at South African universities and colleges, who study South African history as a separate subject. This book thus contains nothing on South African history.

Part 1

***To the end of the
nineteenth century***

Ken Smith



African states and trade before 1800

**Chapter 1:
geography,
African
societies**

Africa after 1800 can hardly be comprehended without a close look at certain aspects of pre-nineteenth-century developments. And in these first two chapters this is what we are going to do. In chapter 1 we shall begin with a quick tour of some of the major geographical areas of the continent north of the Limpopo and sketch in early developments in the establishment of African societies. It is a rather breathless tour, full of names and movements, with one kingdom following another in quick succession and hundreds of years and several empires all being disposed of in double quick time, sometimes even within the space of a single sentence! This will, however, serve a useful purpose, and that is to make the point that African civilisations, or important events and processes in Africa, did not begin when Islam or Europe began making its presence felt. It concentrates on the development of trade in Africa and shows the close link between trade and the formation of states.

**Some
criteria**

Still in chapter 1, this is followed by a section that points out that criteria for examining African societies should not differ from those we would apply in other societies. Here the point is made that Africans acted rationally, and that when they decided to plant a certain crop or not to use a particular device, these decisions were based on their appraisal of the value of such innovations. Where Africans could see an advantage in adopting new methods or implements they were not slow to do so.

Development of African trade

The final section of chapter 1 deals with the development of African trading networks, and distinguishes between short-distance trade, long-distance trade and trade that was directed towards an external export market. It looks at the establishment of long-distance trade routes between West and North Africa prior to the arrival of Europeans on the west coast of Africa from the second half of the fifteenth century, and it also examines the impact of the European presence on this trans-Saharan trade. In all of the chapters of part 1 the influence of foreign trade on Africa features prominently. In chapter 1 the scene is set and Africa's internal trade and trade routes are examined as well as early foreign demand for African products. In chapter 2 the focus is placed on one particular aspect of that foreign demand – the market for slaves in the Americas. Foreign demand for slaves in East Africa and much of Central Africa peaked only after 1800, when the Atlantic trade was going into a slow and uneven decline, and will be dealt with separately in chapter 4.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST AFRICAN SOCIETIES

Africa and the history of man

Not only was Africa the cradle of civilisation but it also provided the first evidence for the existence of man. The very earliest evidence we have for the existence of the hominids who formed the blueprint for modern man, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, and the development of human society, comes from Africa. Dr Louis Leakey's excavations at Olduvai Gorge in northern Tanzania showed that hominids using crude stone tools were living in the area between 1 and 2 million years ago. The first humans lived very much in open country, where game was easier to hunt than in dense forests. Although Africa did not experience the Ice Ages that occurred in Europe, the presence of ice-caps to both the north and the south in the last Ice Age between 70 000 and 10 000 BC affected the balance between forest and savanna. The forests of Zaïre and West Africa became less dense and tropical, and people began living in the forests as well as in the open grasslands. In the forests they began to make increasing use of wood. Another climatic change that began to occur from around 10 000 BC was that the Sahara, which had hitherto been mostly savanna, began drying out. By about 2000 BC the region had turned into the desert we know today.

At the same time as these changes were taking place, the long period of the Stone Age was coming to an end, to be replaced by the so-called Neolithic Revolution. This brought with it not only a more sophisticated range of tools, but also many cultural and technological changes resulting from the discoveries that it was not necessary to collect all of the food from the veld, that grains could be cultivated and that animals could be kept and bred. These discoveries meant that life became less nomadic and that settlements increased in size and became more permanent.

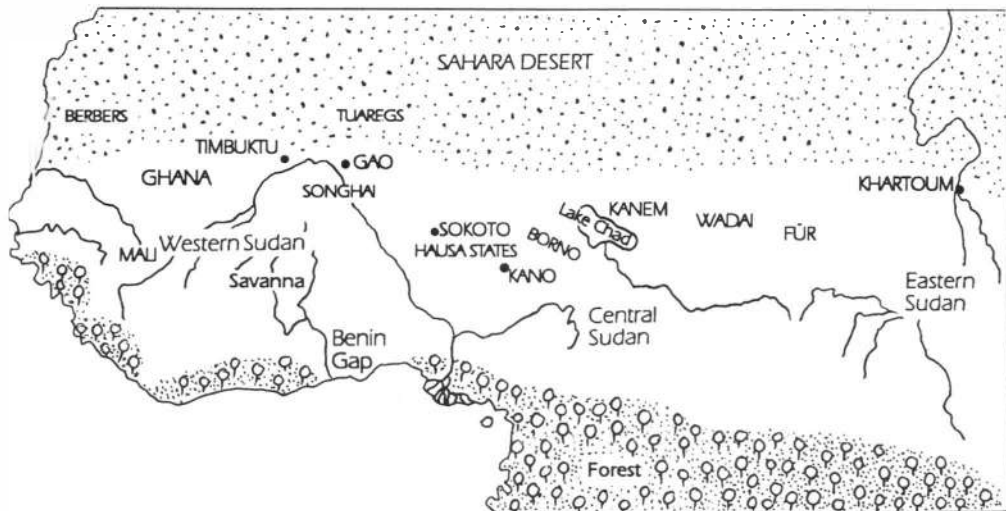
Foraging and domestication

With the development of pastoralism, the older forms of economic activity – gathering, hunting and fishing – did not become redundant but were adapted. Very often they became part-time activities. Some foraging communities, however, continued their way of life long after knowledge of agriculture was widespread. The reason for this is that Africa's tropical grasslands were ideal for foraging. Perhaps that is why human beings evolved in East Africa. For a small population foraging is a fairly secure and leisured

way of life. The shift from foraging to domestication is usually taken to mean a move up the ladder of 'civilisation', but in sub-Saharan Africa this is not so much a movement towards a superior type of organisation as a reflection of the fact that the foraging systems that served humanity so well had degenerated. Why was it necessary to change a satisfactory way of life and go into the business of controlling food supplies? The answer lies in the changes to the physical environment: a general drying out, a decrease in the size and number of lakes. In the days of foraging aquatic societies could support a fairly dense population. Fishing is one form of hunting that provides for a large stationary population. When these lakes started to dry up, large populations could not be supported on foraging and hunting. So they had to go over to domestication and cultivation.

**Geo-
graphi-
cal fea-
tures**

The Sahara desert, in modern times 2 700 km from north to south and close to 8 000 km from west to east, dominates the geography of the northern half of Africa. To the north of it lies the temperate Mediterranean coastland, and southwards are the tropics. It is a frontier racially as well as geographically. In the desert itself and to the north of it live the Berbers and the Arabs. They are fair-skinned people, of Caucasian origin, while to the south of the desert live the blacks, largely Bantu-speaking peoples.



Geographical zones in West Africa

Egypt and the Maghrib (an Arabic word that means 'the west'), which comprises modern Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, are part of the Mediterranean world. At its widest the lands of the Maghrib do not extend much more than 300 km inland before the desert takes over. The Maghrib is dominated by the Atlas chain of mountains, but much of the coastal area is very fertile, and therefore suitable for large-scale settlement. By virtue of their strategic position on the Mediterranean Sea and their abundance of good harbours, the countries of the Maghrib are well situated to control traffic on the

sea, and the history of the Maghrib is interwoven with the history of the struggle for control of the Mediterranean.

The lower Nile valley provided an ideal setting for the growth of a permanent civilisation. By at least 4000 BC agriculture and pastoralism had been established in Egypt and the Nile valley. Animal husbandry is at least as old as agriculture. About 5000 BC pastoralists in the Sahara kept long- and short-horned cattle, sheep and goats. The drying process in the Sahara affected both pastoralists and agriculturists. Cattle herders became nomadic, moving out of the Sahara for most of the year to find grazing and exchange animal products for grain. They would return to the desert with the onset of the rainy season in the savanna which brought with it fly-borne diseases. Agriculturists, unless they had access to land at oases, were forced out of the desert.

Those who moved south went into what is called the Sudan. This is the area between the Sahara desert and the northernmost limits of the tropical forest. The name comes from the Arabic *bilad al-Sudan*, meaning the 'land of the black men'. In the Sudan, as in North Africa, the population increased as a result of immigration from the Sahara and the development of agriculture. In the Niger valley and the Lake Chad basin, as in Egypt and the Nile valley, conditions were favourable for the growth of larger populations because they afforded the right conditions for the development of agriculture, which throughout Africa was the main productive activity.

Agriculture The people in the Sudan had to adapt their Saharan agricultural practices, because wheat and barley did not do well in the Sudan's short growing season; further south these crops could not be cultivated at all as it was too wet. They therefore had to develop new crops from indigenous grasses, and in due course, some time between about 3000 and 1000 BC, millets evolved, including the sorghum species.

Iron and iron-smelting As far as tools are concerned, Africa went rapidly into an Iron Age, without going through the Bronze Age. Iron was in regular use in the Near East by about 1200 BC, and the Phoenicians brought this innovation to North Africa when they began to colonise it. But the large-scale manufacture of iron in Africa seems to have only followed the conquest of Egypt in the seventh century BC by the Assyrians. The techniques of iron smelting probably reached West Africa from North Africa across the Sahara. By about the fourth century AD iron-producing techniques were known throughout West Africa. Although African iron was good, Africa did not have an indigenous steel industry, so later people had to depend on foreign sources for sword blades and gun barrels. It does not seem as if iron had a dramatic impact on early African agriculture. Iron hoes are not much better than wooden ones for preparing the soil for cultivation in what are generally shallow systems. Iron probably had a greater impact on forest clearing, which was also affected by the fact that African smelters used charcoal, which meant large-scale destruction of forests.

Food production in the forests With the exception of the land between modern Ghana and Nigeria, where there was a gap in the forest belt (which is often referred to as the 'Benin gap'), to the south of the Sudan there was thick tropical forest that was very difficult to penetrate, and where the crops that thrived in the savanna could not be grown. Cereals tended to predominate

in the savanna, and roots in a large part of the forest. With the exception of yams, which were not so much a forest crop as one that grew on the fringes of the forest, there were no edible wild plants in the forest, and so initially the number of people who went to live in the forests was not as great as the number who lived in the savanna of the Sudan. Besides which the forests were singularly unattractive for cattle, as there was a lack of food on the one hand and an abundance of tsetse fly on the other. The people in the forests made use of the rivers, supplementing their diet with fishing. In time access was gained to the Congo (Zaire) basin, and by travelling along its tributaries migrants eventually came out into savanna lands like those in the Sudan, where they could grow their crops. There was a nuclear settlement in and around Katanga, from which the Bantu expansion to the southern half of the continent took place.

Expansion to the south This was the base for the next major expansion movement, which went west and east along this woodland zone. To the west they came to the Atlantic coast just south of the mouth of the Congo River, and to the east the Indian Ocean east of Lake Nyasa (Malawi). By about the third century a north–south expansion movement took place in Uganda in the north and Zimbabwe in the south, and another north–south expansion movement along the eastern coast went towards southern Somalia in the north and the Zambezi mouth in the south.

Spreading of crops This coastal expansion brought the Bantu-speaking peoples into contact with Indian Ocean trade and Southeast Asian foodcrops. At the same time African crops were introduced to other continents. Africa had indigenous staples of millet, sorghum, yam and rice. African sorghums became a major South Asian food crop in the first millennium BC; after 1500 African yams took over from indigenous yams in most of the tropical New World. From an examination of botanical evidence it seems likely that many crops, including bananas, new varieties of cocoyam (taro) and rice, coconuts and sugar, came to Africa from Southeast Asia via the island of Madagascar between about 300 and 800 AD. The banana was the most important of these as it became the main staple of various East and East Central African communities. The arrival of the Portuguese in the late fifteenth century brought other crops such as maize (American corn), manioc (cassava), groundnuts, tobacco and a variety of fruits. Some of these were introduced directly from Brazil, others came via Iberia. Cassava was introduced in the sixteenth century, but it did not spread rapidly until the latter part of the eighteenth century, when people learned how to remove the prussic acid that some varieties contained. Cassava was drought resistant, could be grown in poor soil and required less labour than almost any other crop. It had a high calorie level, but was a low-protein starch. Until colonial times it was not so important or dominant. But it had one advantage in long-distance trading zones – its grains could easily be dried and carried, to be used as food for caravan porters, or for the crews and cargoes of slaving ships.

Some crops spread more rapidly than others. For example, Columbus brought knowledge of maize from the Americas at the end of the fifteenth century. Within 50 years of his voyage, maize had reached modern Nigeria by a route that went from the Mediterranean to Egypt, across the Sahara to Senegambia and then to modern Nigeria. The introduction of these crops not only accelerated the growth of agricultural com-

munities, but also later helped the Bantu to occupy fully the forests of the Congo basin, northwest of the Katanga nucleus, and also the West African forests which had initially been sparsely populated, for these new crops then spread northwards towards the Sudan.

Cattle The Bantu pioneers would not have taken cattle with them through the forests. They obtained these from the inhabitants they found living in the area. In Central and southern Africa they obtained cattle from the Khoisan peoples.

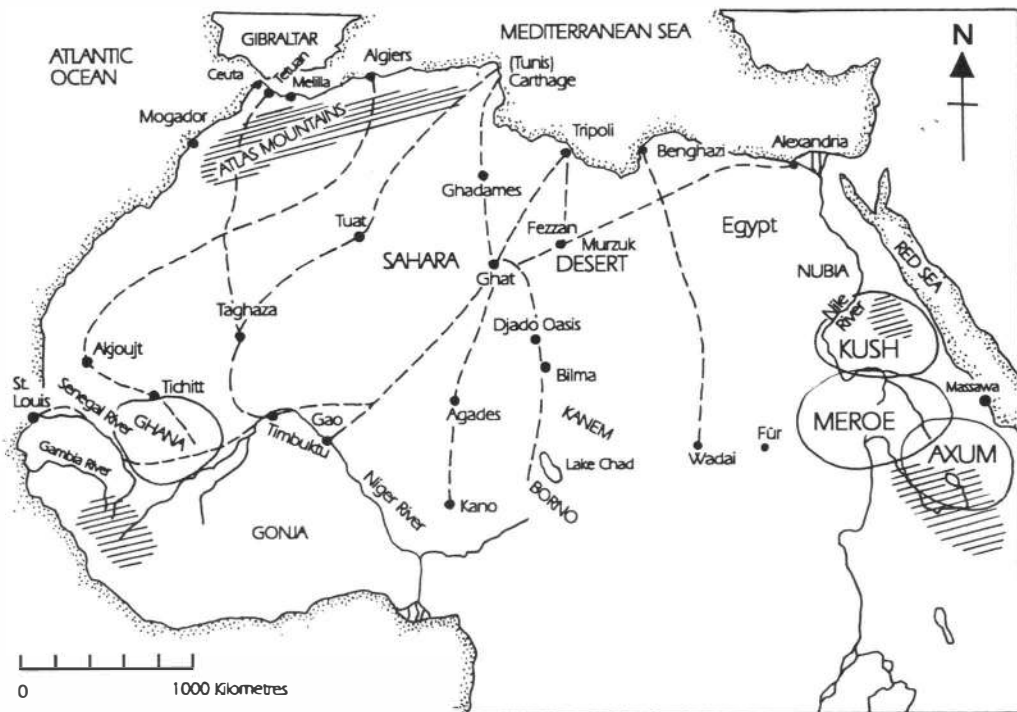
NORTH AFRICA

Role of foreign trade Trade played an important role in the formation of civilisations and kingdoms in Africa. The earliest civilisation to be established in Africa was in Egypt, which was extremely fertile because of the annual flooding of the Nile. It was also situated at the crossroads between Africa and Asia, and where the Mediterranean world met that of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. Egyptian civilisation reached its peak about 2400 BC. Although Egypt was ideal for agriculture and became the granary of much of the ancient world, it had little stone, timber or metals, and the Egyptians had to rely heavily on foreign trade. Boats made of papyrus reeds could travel southwards along the Nile to what was called Nubia, and both Egyptian trading and raiding began here about 2500 BC. But because they lacked supplies of timber, the Egyptians did not build ships that could sail on the Mediterranean or Red Sea, with the result that much of their foreign trade from these quarters was carried in the ships of other nations.

Egypt Egypt was subdued by numerous conquerors. Nubia, originally colonised by Egyptians, in turn invaded and conquered the Land of the Pyramids, and held it until the Assyrians overran Egypt in 671–666 BC. Towards the end of the seventh century BC, Greek immigrants began to establish agricultural settlements in Cyrenaica's fertile valleys. At the same time a colony of Greek traders set themselves up near the Rosetta mouth of the Nile, coming to dominate much of Egypt's commercial life and trading relations. This influence culminated in the conquest of Egypt by Alexander of Macedon in 332 BC. When Alexander's empire fell apart after his death in 323 BC, one of Alexander's generals, Ptolemy, established a new dynasty that ruled for close on three hundred years. He moved the capital to Alexandria on the Mediterranean. Alexandria soon became the greatest of all Greek cities. Not only did Judaism become established here, but it also became a major centre of Christianity. The Greeks in time gave way to Roman conquerors. The Romans were drawn to Africa by the agricultural wealth of Egypt and its access to Asian and Indian Ocean trade. In 30 BC Egypt became a formal Roman province.

Kush and Meroe Nubia had been colonised by Egypt at an early date, but in the eleventh century BC, when civil disturbances wracked Egypt, Nubia took the opportunity of establishing itself as the independent kingdom of Kush. After the Assyrian rise to ascendancy in Egypt, the centre of gravity of Kush moved southwards, resulting in the founding of a new capital of Meroe in the south. In times of trouble with Egypt, when Kush's trade along the Nile declined, its trade with the Red Sea area expanded. Meroe was linked to

Zeila on the coast. Meroe's power was based on its iron industry, the wealth of its foreign trade and its strong agricultural base. Between 200 and 300 AD, Meroe's fertile agricultural land declined. The most probable reason for this is that the charcoal-hungry iron-smelting process resulted in too many trees being felled, with a consequent increase in soil erosion and loss of topsoil. Meroe's trade connections with Roman Egypt via the Nile and along the Red Sea brought it great profits as the Romans were buyers of Meroe luxury goods such as gold, ostrich feathers, ebony and ivory, and leopard skins. The decline of the Roman Empire meant that there was less demand for these articles. Besides these adverse circumstances, the rising Axum empire to the southeast of Meroe and closer to the coast deprived Meroe of much of its trade with the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. By the time that Axum invaded Meroe in 350 AD the Meroe kingdom was in an advanced state of disintegration.



Major trans-Saharan routes; the ancient kingdoms of Kush, Meroe and Axum

Axum The origins of Axum are to be found among the Semitic inhabitants of southwestern Arabia (in and around the modern Yemen) who built up a flourishing agricultural civilisation which was expanding to Africa by the seventh century BC. Traders in search of incense, spices and ivory were followed by farmers. Behind the arid western coastlands, in the highlands of modern Ethiopia and Eritrea, they planted their crops and

engaged in the ivory, gold and gum trades. By the first century AD these colonists had mixed with the local people and had established the kingdom of Axum in the highlands of Ethiopia, with its capital near the Eritrean border. It evolved a language and writing of its own. By the third century it was so powerful that for a period it extended its rule into the Yemen across the Red Sea. Axum was at the height of its power in the fourth century under King Ezana (c. 320–350 AD), who was also the first king to become a Christian. Towards the end of the fifth century, Monophysite monks reached Axum. They were very successful, and Christianity became an important factor in the national life of the people. This was the root of the Ethiopian Church. Fage writes that: 'The kingdom withdrew into the interior highlands, absorbed more and more essentially African peoples, and so, while remaining steadfastly if idiosyncratically Christian, transformed itself from the Graeco-Semitic kingdom of Axum into the African kingdom of Ethiopia which lasted into the twentieth century.'¹

As in the case of Meroe, a combination of factors was responsible for the decline of Axum in the eighth century. In the first place it lost much of its trade in the wake of the expansion of Islam into North Africa, for the Persian Gulf rather than the Red Sea now cornered most of the trade between the Indian Ocean and the eastern Mediterranean. It is likely that its decline was also partly due to a deterioration in the natural environment.

**The
Phoeni-
cians**

North Africa also became subject to the Phoenicians, known to us through the Bible as the Canaanites, who hailed from the coast of Syria and Lebanon. Best known as the inventors of the alphabet which we use today, by the eighth century BC they were becoming entrenched in three areas in particular: Tunisia, Tripolitania, and the northern Atlantic coast of Morocco. Tunisia, which had the biggest single stretch of fertile coastland in the whole of northwestern Africa, was well situated *vis-à-vis* Sicily, where the Phoenicians were competing fiercely against the Greeks in trade. The Tunisian colonies flourished and by the sixth century the biggest of them, Carthage, asserted its independence and its control over all the other settlements in Africa and the western Mediterranean.

The trade routes that led from the Phoenician footholds on the North African coast across the western Sahara towards the western Sudan were firmly in the hands of nomadic Berber pastoralists, so that the influence of Carthage was limited to the settled agricultural areas of North Africa. During the heyday of Carthage the Punic language became the trade language of northwest Africa, while the introduction of Semitic cultural influences paved the way for the later introduction of Judaism, Christianity and Islam into the region. The permanent legacy of Carthage, however, was not substantial.

**The
Punic
Wars**

Between 264 and 146 BC the Romans were engaged in an almost continuous struggle with Carthage, in what are known as the Punic Wars. Even after the Romans made themselves masters of Sicily in 201 BC they could not rest peacefully while Carthage remained strong, and the wars were finally ended only with the total destruction of Carthage in 146 BC.

Eventually the Romans occupied virtually all the agricultural land from Egypt to Morocco. But the borders of their African provinces were continually raided by the tribes of the interior. Soldiers were sent to guard the military frontier, the *limes*. A combination of these soldiers and immigrant farmers gave rise to a new Romano-Berber population. This stabilised population made North Africa an integral part of the Roman empire, detached in many ways from the rest of the African continent. It was far more firmly attached to the Mediterranean than it was to Africa.

Impact of the Roman empire The impact of the Roman empire on Africa beyond the *limes* was very small, and although trade goods came from the south, this trade was in the hands of desert dwellers. In fact, in their attempts to ease defence of the borders it seems as if the Romans aggravated the situation. The camel, which had reached Egypt via Asia, was seen by the Romans as an ideal animal for soldiers guarding the frontier. But it soon became apparent that it was even more suitable for desert raiders.

Religion By the fifth century the Roman empire was crumbling everywhere. The influence of the Mediterranean world on Africa was in decline. But it left behind the culture and religion of Christianity. One of the most significant legacies of the Greek, Roman and Phoenician interludes in Africa was in the sphere of religion. Alexandria was a major intellectual centre, from which religious influences radiated. Athanasius (c. 296–373), the father of modern Christian doctrine, came from Alexandria. Arius, his opponent, who propagated the Arian heresy, was born in Libya. Judaism also came to North Africa in these years, which is perhaps not surprising when one considers the close links that existed between Phoenicia and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. By Roman times there were fairly large Jewish communities in Egypt and other places in North Africa, not only in the towns but also further inland.

Christianity Christianity had spread in Africa before Constantine's conversion, but it probably entrenched itself even further after it became the official religion of the Roman empire. What is interesting about Christianity in Africa was the tendency for sects to develop, a process which started in the first few centuries of the Christian era in North Africa. In Egypt the Coptic Church developed, based on the Monophysite view of the nature of Christ, which had been declared heretical by the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

Islam It was less than seven years after the death of the prophet Mohammed that the Arabs spilled over into Africa and attacked Egypt in 639. By 642 Egypt had been overwhelmed and Christianity survived only as the religion of some of the poorer people of the country. Spirited Nubian resistance contained the Arabs in their southward push and the advance of Islam in this direction was halted. Ethiopia, isolated by mountains, survived as a Christian kingdom. From Egypt the Arabs moved along the North African coast, initially meeting with fierce resistance from the local Hamitic-speaking Berber tribes. It was not long, however, before they began to embrace Islam, which acted as a unifying force and helped to give a measure of unity to the Maghrib that it had not enjoyed previously because of the deep divisions between the various Berber tribes, particularly between the more settled and cosmopolitan Berbers of the coastal plains and the largely nomadic tribesmen of the mountains.

Early in the eighth century the whole of the Maghrib was in Arab hands. The Muslim drive did not stop here, however, and in 711 the battle was taken to Europe when the mixed Berber and Arab legions of Islam invaded the Iberian peninsula. It was only in 732 that Charles Martel stopped them at Tours, and the Muslim advance came to an end. But it was to be close on seven hundred years before the Europeans gained the initiative and drove the Muslims from the peninsula and carried their counter-offensive into North Africa.

For the most part the Arabs who had hitherto come to Africa had been a small urban upper-class group, educated and sophisticated, speaking the classical Arabic of the Koran. But from the middle of the eleventh century Arab Bedouin tribes swept across the Maghrib. It is estimated that within a few years about 200 000 of these Bedouin herdsmen had descended on the Maghrib as conquerors and colonisers. This was a watershed in the history of the Maghrib as the Berbers of the mountains and the desert came into contact with the Bedouin and, like the Berbers of the coastal plains, accepted Arab culture, although on a much lower level than the classical language and culture of the towns.

The Ottoman empire

Europe remained on the defensive against the triumphant forces of Islam until the fifteenth century when Portugal and Spain drove the Muslims, now called Moors, from the Iberian peninsula. In 1415 the Portuguese carried the fight to the Moors in North Africa, capturing the Moroccan port of Ceuta. In 1497 Spain took Melilla on the North African coast from the Moors, and in the course of the first part of the sixteenth century Spain and Portugal captured most of the ports of the Maghrib. But as Muslim reaction to the European conquests mounted, the Ottoman Turks stepped in to put an end to the European expansion. In the fifteenth century the Ottomans had built up a powerful Muslim state in the Mediterranean, and in 1517 Egypt became part of their empire; Ottoman influence also spread down the Red Sea coasts. Turkish naval power drove the Spaniards from the eastern and central Maghrib and Turkish colonies were established in Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, so that by 1590 the Turks had virtually driven the Spanish from North Africa. By 1800 the whole of North Africa, with the exception of Morocco, had become part of the Ottoman empire.

All of the new possessions of the Ottomans owed allegiance to the sultan in Istanbul (Constantinople). But it was a huge, widespread empire, and the Ottomans lacked the resources or the will to make their rule effective. For the most part their government did not fall heavily on their subjects. In Africa they appointed local sultans who governed without much reference to Istanbul. So long as they acknowledged Ottoman suzerainty and sent the appropriate tribute to the Porte, they were for the most part left to their own devices. The Ottoman empire went into a slow but steady decline, but by 1800 it still held all its North African possessions with the exception of Egypt, which was occupied by Napoleon in 1798 as part of his grand plan for severing Britain's lifeline with India. When the French withdrew after a brief occupation, the country reverted to Ottoman control.

Piracy North African coastal towns conducted trade with Europe, and pirates operating from Maghrib ports preyed on European shipping in the Mediterranean. In the eighteenth century the prosperity of Algiers rested firmly on the activity of its corsairs. European retaliation, which included the bombardment of Algiers, and more adequate protection of ships helped reduce but did not stamp out piracy. Other places that did well out of piracy were Tunisia, and Tripolitania, for whom piracy was the largest source of income in the last part of the eighteenth century.

WEST AFRICA

The Sudan

Geo-graphical features North to south the width of the Sudan has varied over the ages. In the north the desert tends to make inroads into the Sudan whereas in the south the clearing of forest areas has tended to increase the Sudan in that direction. The Sudan is divided into the western Sudan and eastern Sudan, with Lake Chad as the dividing line. Sometimes we speak of the central Sudan by which we mean the Sudan of northern Nigeria and Chad. (The use of the word 'Sudan' is not to be confused with the Sudan Republic in northeast Africa, south of Egypt, which is really part of the geographical area of the eastern Sudan.)

In this chapter at least, the western Sudan, which extends from Senegal to Lake Chad, a distance of well over 3 000 km, is the most important for our purposes. It is about 1 000 km wide and consists of a belt of undulating grassland studded with trees. To the south of it is the tropical forest belt, running from west to east, but even at its widest, not more than 300 km from north to south. These main vegetation zones have been there since about 300 BC, and are the result of a drying-out process which began some 10 000 to 12 000 years ago and which also saw the formation of the Sahara desert.

Trans-Saharan trade Although the Sahara desert has always been something of a barrier to the large-scale movement of people, it has not been a bar to trade. Early in the Christian era the camel was introduced to the region and a number of trans-Saharan trade routes developed. By the beginning of the ninth century there was regular trade across the Sahara. Trade played a decisive role in the formation of states. It would seem that political growth in West Africa spread from north to south, from the Sahel, the southern shore of the Sahara, deeper into the Sudan and from the Sudan into Guinea. For centuries the agriculturists of the Sahel must have been subject to raids, infiltration and settlement by the nomadic pastoralists from the desert. Constant raiding would tend to make the agriculturists join up into larger and more easily defensible settlements. Villages would grow into fortified towns, which would in turn become larger, requiring all sorts of sociopolitical changes. The arrival of newcomers from the desert facilitated the development of larger political entities through the introduction of horses, which gave rulers greater power over remote areas. With the cavalry and the discipline needed to survive in a harsh desert, they were better organised than the agricultural people they attacked and they came to be the dominant factor.

Ancient Ghana It was this military interaction that spurred the formation of centralised states, of which ancient Ghana was the prime example. (The ancient kingdom of Ghana should not be

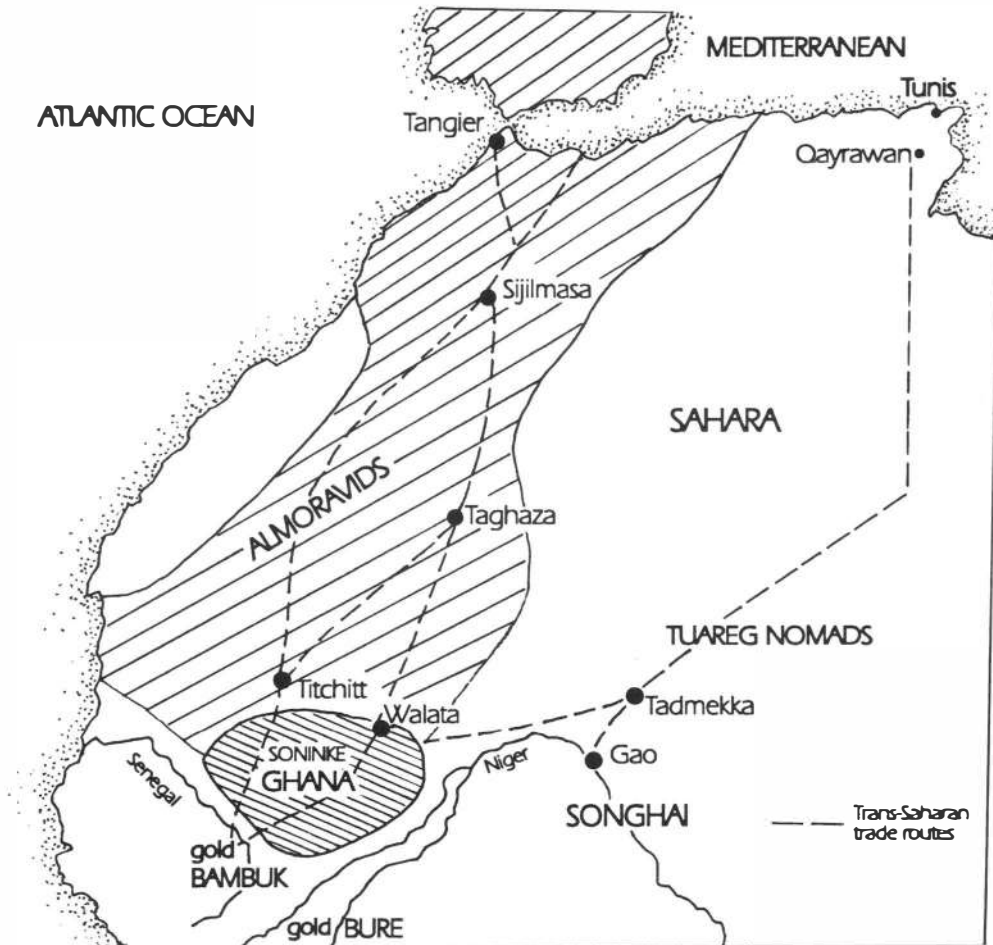
confused with modern Ghana which is much further to the south and east. Ancient Ghana was to the north of the upper Niger and Senegal valleys, dominating the southern parts of modern Mauritania and Mali. Speakers of the Soninke language, a division of Mande, formed the largest group in ancient Ghana.)

An important aspect of the origins of states in many parts of Africa is control over trade. A large centralised state provided security and promoted exchange instead of raiding. This is particularly true of Ghana. It would seem that one of the main reasons why a large kingdom should have developed here was to monopolise or control trade between the Sudan on the one hand and the Sahara and Mediterranean coastlands of North Africa on the other. It seems likely that as early as the tenth century there was a sophisticated trade in gold and salt. The fact that Ghana was situated in arid southern Mauritania and Mali, rather than in more congenial circumstances further south, indicates that its aim was to control the gold from Bambuk on the upper Senegal River and from Bure, further south on the upper Niger. One of the most important economic activities of Ghana was to collect this gold from the south and to exchange it for Saharan salt and North African manufactures brought by Tuareg tribesmen of the western desert.

Salt Salt was a major item of trade in West Africa. In this part of the continent much of the salt came from the Sahara desert where there were good rock-salt resources. The western Sudan obtained its salt supplies from a number of areas in or close to the Sahara. Salt is a biological requirement, a necessary dietary supplement for those who live in a tropical climate, who eat mainly cereals and have a low consumption of meat and fish. This sort of situation applies to much of West Africa, and in particular to parts of the western Sudan. In tenth-century Gao, the capital of Songhai, salt was such a rare commodity that its safe-keeping was a royal prerogative. Salt was so sought after that it was often exchanged weight for weight with gold.

Control over trade This trade was subject to organised royal control and taxation. The rulers of Ghana tried to ensure that all valuable exports from the western Sudan passed through their hands and that they had control over the distribution of Saharan and North African goods in the Sudan. The trade in gold became virtually a state monopoly. Wealth became very much concentrated in the hands of the ruling classes. The more powerful the state the more it could obtain by way of tribute and tribute gave the rulers surplus goods with which to trade.

The Almoravids Operation of the caravan routes was in the hands of the Saharan Berber tribes but, as the power of the Ghana kings increased, they showed signs of wanting to extend control northwards at the expense of these desert carriers. Although Ghana made serious inroads into the routes of the Sanhaja, the latter in the eleventh century came under the sway of a rigid puritanical form of Islam and were transformed into a military federation known as the Almoravids. In the middle of the eleventh century the Almoravids conquered the agriculturists on both sides of the desert. Ghana itself was conquered, probably in 1076. The Almoravids had even greater successes in Northwest Africa and the Iberian peninsula.

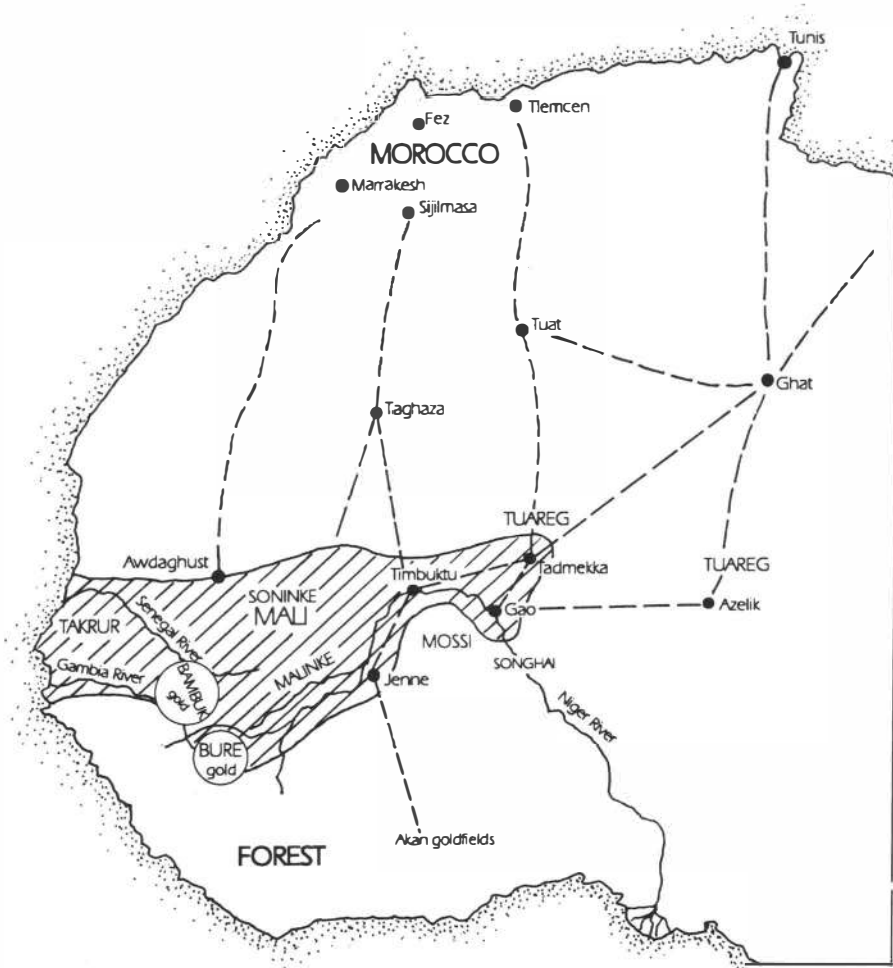


The Ghana and Almoravid empires of the tenth and eleventh centuries

The Almoravids, however, did not bring stability. They neglected agriculture, were always quarrelling among themselves, and by the end of the eleventh century the former Soninke (northern Mande) rulers had regained control of the kingdom. But the Almoravids had caused damage that could not be repaired. Trans-Saharan traders were now using more central routes leading to the Niger bend, avoiding the western routes through the disturbed western Sahara, with the result that Ghana did not regain its former glory.

Mali Mande groups in the south, who lived closer to the Niger, whose agriculture had not been disrupted, and who had more direct control over the alluvial gold deposits, began to break away from Ghana, eventually inheriting the mantle of Ghana and founding the Mande empire of Mali. The new southern termini of the trans-Saharan trade were now

Timbuktu and Gao, and the Mali empire tried to control the whole of the Sudan as far as the Niger bend, where these territories were situated. So the Niger was the focal point of this empire. But navigation of the river downstream from modern Segu was in the hands of the Songhai, a non-Mande people. The Mali empire extended its control to the Songhai and retained it until the beginning of the fifteenth century.



The Mali empire in the fourteenth century

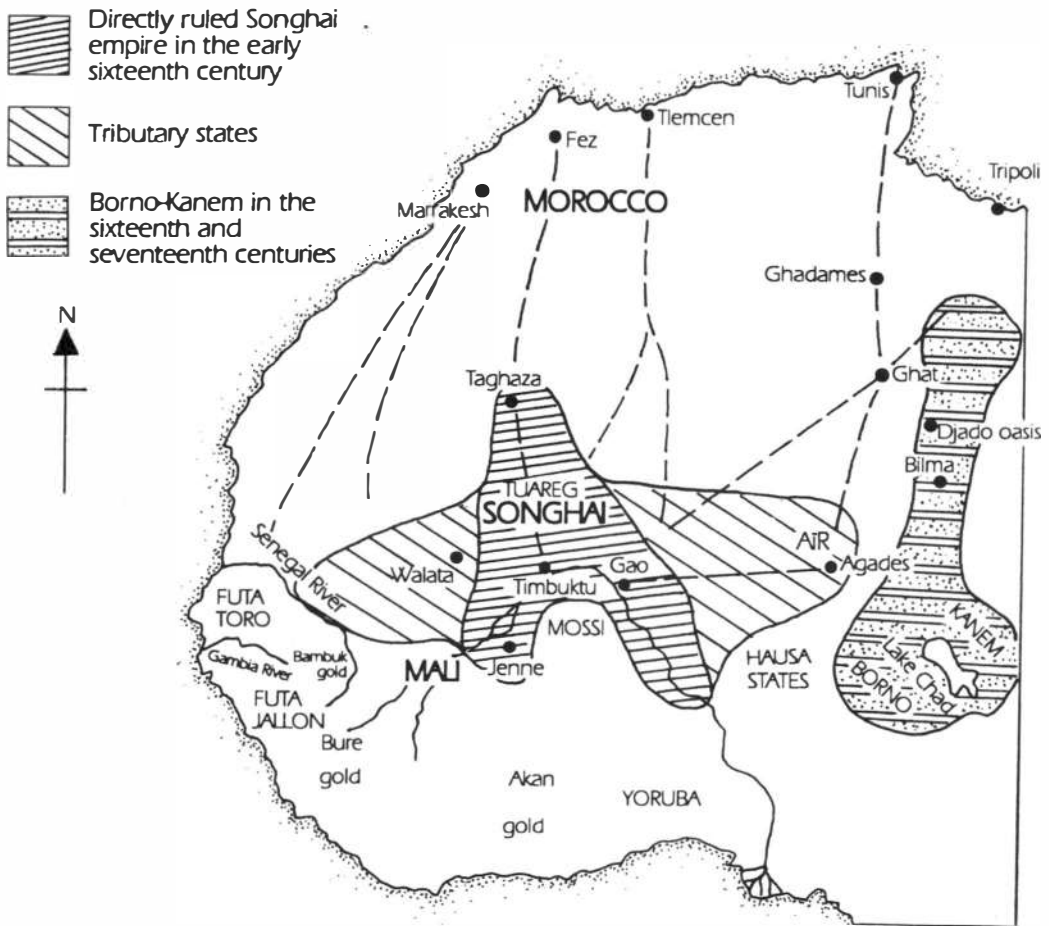
**The
Songhai
empire**

In the fourteenth century Mali was characterised by its orderliness and good government. But in the second half of the fourteenth century, when Mande central power was weakened by faction fights among the royal family, the Songhai took the opportunity of asserting their independence. The military power of Mali was destroyed over a long period of campaigning. Songhai became a major empire, dominating the trade from the

western Sudan destined for the Sahara, and likewise receiving goods that came across the desert for distribution in the Sudan.

Collapse of the Songhai empire

The Songhai empire collapsed in 1591 as the result of a Moroccan expedition which crossed the desert to Gao and Timbuktu in 1590-1591. The easy victory may be explained by the fact that from 1528 to 1590 there was a fierce struggle between two political groups in the empire, so that by 1591 the empire had become very much weakened from within. The long-term objective of the Moroccan sultan al-Mansur in launching the attack was to establish direct control over Sudanic gold resources and so outflank Europe. The plan failed, but it did destroy the Songhai empire, leaving in its place a number of smaller, competing and internally unstable political entities. This disorder hindered long-distance trade. It has also been blamed for severe famine and disease in the western Sudan in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.



The Songhai and Borno-Kanem empires in the sixteenth century

This was the end of the plan conceived by ancient Ghana of a single major power controlling tribute and trade from the entire western Sudan. After the fall of Songhai, trade routes moved even further east to Kanem and Hausaland.

Kanem Besides this Ghana/Mali/Songhai axis of large states, there was another large centralised state in the central Sudan named Kanem. The Kanem monarchy of the Saifawa dynasty was north and northeast of Lake Chad. Kanem did not have access to the same amount of gold as Ghana, so its economic base was not quite so specific. By the start of the thirteenth century, Kanem controlled territory around Lake Chad to the south, and to the north its power extended to the important salt deposits at Bilma and the oasis of Djado. But three centuries of internecine strife among factions of the ruling Saifawa group weakened the empire, and the mais eventually withdrew from Kanem and re-established their kingdom in the province of Borno, southwest of Lake Chad in modern northern Nigeria. This kingdom became increasingly powerful in the sixteenth century.

Islam Trans-Saharan trade brought contact with Islam. The influence of Islam had preceded the conquest of Ghana, but the defeat brought Islam to the heart of Ghana. It was not long before Islam came to the small Hausa kingdoms. The conversion of the mais, the rulers of Kanem, to Islam around the end of the eleventh century shows the importance of trans-Saharan trade in that part of the Sudan. By the eleventh century the Muslim trade with the Sudan had revolutionised trading patterns and at the same time given a tremendous fillip to indigenous African cultures. It brought a written language and literate officials to West Africa.

Islam generally became the religion of the rulers, the traders and the scholars of the principal cities. But the rural population remained tied to its traditional laws and customs. It should be noted that whereas North Africa became a part of the world of Islam both historically and culturally, the western Sudan did not. It was on the outer edge of the Muslim world, and black culture, although greatly changed and modified through contact with Islam, remained basically intact. At this stage Islam was confined to the ruling and merchant classes. The Muslims who entered the Sudan were literate and with experience of a wider world, and they were sought after by rulers who used them in high administrative positions and often became Muslims themselves. West African traders readily adopted Islam. It provided a framework of trust and credit for the conduct of business. This was important where business transactions and credit depended on affiliations and personal trust.

Guinea

Mande kingdom Guinea comprises mainly the forest area to the south of the Sudan. Although the political and commercial system built up by the Mande, as exemplified in the Ghana and Mali kingdoms, and even in Songhai to some extent, did have an influence in Guinea, there was no military intervention and political domination. One of the main reasons for this was that the military superiority of the western Sudanic kingdoms depended very much on their monopoly of cavalry, which was difficult to use in

woodland savanna and could not be used at all in the forest zone, although the 'Benin gap' in the forest belt was more open to northern influences.

Mande initiatives had more effect in the lands immediately to the west and south of the Mande heartland, in the vicinity of the upper reaches of the Niger and Senegal rivers, which was occupied by people such as the Tukolor, Wolof, Serer and Dyula. The disruption accompanying the Mande process of state formation in the western Sudan caused Mande-speaking refugees to move west and south, either as traders or conquerors. What Mande traders wanted from the south and southeast was gold which could be obtained from the valley of the Black Volta and in many places in the forests of the southern Ivory Coast and modern Ghana.

Kola nuts They also wanted kola nuts, the most popular type of which was *cola nitida* which grew wild in the tropical forests from Liberia to modern Ghana. Containing caffeine, kola nuts are a mild stimulant and were thus in demand because Muslim law prohibited the consumption of alcohol. When chewed, the refreshing flavour helped to combat tiredness and thirst.

The Oyo empire Other kingdoms of note were the Nupe kingdom, north of the Niger–Benue confluence, the Igala kingdom to the south of Nupe, the Yoruba kingdoms which lay to the south of Borgu and southwest of Nupe, the Benin kingdom which was east of the Yoruba, and the Aja kingdom, which was to the west of Benin. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Oyo was the dominant Yoruba state. Evidence suggests that the Benin and Yoruba kingdoms were created by bands of immigrants from the north and northeast. The success of the immigrants may have been due to their possession of cavalry. The Oyo armies, which in the seventeenth century extended Oyo power vigorously southwards, were based on cavalry. Early Oyo history suggests a continual jostling for power with the savanna kingdoms of Borgu and Nupe. The newcomers may also have been town builders. Major towns had walls around them, very reminiscent of the walls of Kano and Katsina.

The Niger delta During the slave trade era, the Niger delta was to feature prominently in trading relations. It was one of the areas that came into prominence as a result of its trade with Europe. But there was also vigorous trade in the region before the arrival of Europeans. The people of the Niger delta and from the creeks as far as Cameroon were sending salt and dried fish to the north, obtaining agricultural produce in exchange. There was also an east–west trade as far as southern Yorubaland.

A European presence on the west coast

Portugal In the fifteenth century Portugal took the lead in Europe's return to Africa. From their base at Ceuta the Portuguese were able to obtain firsthand information about the trans-Saharan caravan routes of West Africa. Because of their long tradition of seafaring, the Portuguese had retained their interest in further exploration. Prince Henry of Portugal, called Henry the Navigator, established a school for navigation at Sagres and encouraged exploration of the African coastline. His motives were a mixture of idealism and practical considerations. On the practical side he wanted to see how far the power

and authority of the Moors extended, to find out whether it would be possible to outflank them; he hoped to contact the legendary Prester John, supposedly a Christian king, and to make common cause with him against the Muslims. Also, on a very practical level, he wanted to tap the gold resources of West Africa. On the idealistic side there was a desire to convert the heathen.

These were Henry's motives, but in broader terms for some time European countries had been giving thought to finding their own way to the East, to India. The Crusaders in their struggle against Islam had come into contact with the products of the Byzantine and Islamic worlds, and Europe had quickly developed a taste for what the Far East had to offer. Genoa and Venice became great centres of trade as the fabulous products of India were funnelled through these two ports via Muslim middlemen. This trade was seriously disrupted when Istanbul and large areas of the Black Sea, Asia Minor and North Africa came into Ottoman hands in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, closing the overland routes to the Far East, and rendering voyages to the Near East dangerous and unattractive. So there was an incentive for European nations to visit the East themselves.

By the time that Henry died in 1460 Portuguese ships had gone as far south as Sierra Leone and had discovered and colonised the Cape Verde Islands, the value of which as a base for exploitation of the mainland was quickly appreciated. Others continued with Henry's work, and in 1487 Bartholomew Diaz became the first European sailor in modern times to sail around the Cape; on 1 March 1498 Vasco da Gama sailed into the harbour of Mozambique and reached Calicut in India in May 1498. The Portuguese had found their way to the East.

**Stages
in At-
lantic
trade**

Although a variety of articles had been traded in Africa before the slave trade came to dominate markets, and continued to be traded throughout the period of the slave trade, in general terms one can say that the Atlantic trade went through a number of stages in each of which there was a single dominant item. The first was gold. Europe's first trading contacts with the West African coast were made in the hope of finding gold. The most important of the west coast stations were on the Gold Coast, the central one of which was Elmina (meaning literally 'the mine'). This was established in 1482. Portuguese settlement of the islands of the Gulf of Guinea began about 1484. These were Fernando Po, Príncipe and São Tomé.

**The
Dutch**

By the second half of the sixteenth century other European nations were challenging Portugal's dominant position. In the Eighty Years' War, the closing of Portuguese and Spanish ports to the Dutch by Philip II of Spain struck a mortal blow at the Dutch economy as the Dutch had become the great carriers of Europe, their ships collecting the spices brought by Portuguese ships from the East and then distributing these throughout Europe. The Dutch were now forced to pioneer their own way to the East. By the end of the sixteenth century they had done so, and by 1610 the superior Dutch fleets had smashed Portuguese power in the East and laid the basis for the establishment of a Dutch colonial empire. In 1621 the Dutch West India Company was established; in the later 1630s it captured large parts of Brazil. In their search for labour

for their South American possessions the Dutch concentrated on obtaining slaves from the Gold Coast where they set up forts and stations, taking Elmina from the Portuguese in 1637. The French too showed an interest in the west coast and by the middle of the sixteenth century there was a strong French presence on the coast between the Senegal and Gambia rivers.

Britain Along the Gambia Britain occupied St James in 1618. There was great competition between the Netherlands, France and Britain on the Gold Coast. Between 1662 and 1713 the Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading to Africa and its successor, the Royal African Company, established posts in the Gold Coast, Gambia and Sierra Leone. Brandenburg (later Prussia), Sweden and Denmark all had posts on the west coast for brief periods of the seventeenth century.

European posts The posts which the Europeans established were fortified because of the gold trade and not because of the slave trade. European trading posts were rarely fortified unless they traded in gold, and were designed for defence against European rivals, not Africans. Gold could easily be carried off by pirates or others, but slaves could not. By the eighteenth century there were some two dozen or so major stone forts on the Gold Coast; a number of the forts were in the 'Benin gap' where the savanna interrupted the forest and swept down to the sea, which meant healthier conditions for foreigners in the tropics.

Europeans not trade innovators The desire for gold even explains the entry of Europeans into other markets. The capture or purchase of slaves was often undertaken to facilitate the trade in gold. Professor Fage says that the early Portuguese were not innovators of trade and had very little of their own to offer that would interest African buyers. So they simply serviced existing local trading patterns. At first they obtained cloth in Morocco and exchanged this for gold on the Gold Coast. They later obtained trading goods from closer at hand in Benin which, though not a great producer itself, had a well-organised trading system with easy access to the sea. They obtained beads, cloth and slaves in the Bight of Benin, exchanging these for gold on the Gold Coast. One of the main Portuguese imports to Benin was brassware. Early Portuguese entry into Angola was linked to the desire for slaves to send to the Gold Coast where they could be sold in exchange for gold, and also to the hope that Angola would have gold.² Sometimes other European traders also used their ships to expand and take over existing African markets, or to create new markets in Africa for existing trade products. Like the Portuguese, the Dutch took beads and cloth from Benin, trading these for gold on the Gold Coast. Europeans obtained African-woven textiles from the Ijebu, Benin and the Ivory Coast, and sold them on the Gold Coast. The export of West African gold via the Atlantic reached a peak in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After that it decreased sharply.

But of course not all early European activity was linked to the search for gold. Besides gold and slaves, ivory from the Ivory Coast and dye-woods and hardwoods from the forests were also traded. St Louis (at the mouth of the Senegal River) and Gorée were the main French possessions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. St Louis was close to the Mauritanian forests and appropriated much of the gum from the forests.

CENTRAL AND EAST AFRICA

Central Africa South of a line from Cameroon to the Kenya–Somalia border was the country of Bantu-speaking peoples. As in West Africa, the settlement pattern of this part of Africa was very much conditioned by geographical factors. The first nucleus of expansion shortly before the Christian era was between Lake Tanganyika and the upper waters of the Kasai (that is Katanga) where migrants found the same type of woodland savanna as they had known in West Africa. Conditions here were favourable for the emergence of large kingdoms – it had the right amount of rainfall for farming, it was rich in minerals, and iron- and copper-working were well advanced. The largest state in this vicinity was the Luba kingdom of northern Katanga.

The Kongo By the end of the fifteenth century there were a number of large kingdoms in Central Africa. There was the Kongo kingdom of the Bakonga south of the Congo (Zaire) River which dominated about 250 km of coastline. In this kingdom, which was at the height of its power at the end of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese were active in the southern savannas south of the equatorial forest. Their involvement differed from that in the rest of West Africa. Initially trade was not so important, and King John II of Portugal hoped to make contact with Prester John through the Kongo. The Portuguese tried to establish good relations with the densely populated kingdom, sending teachers and missionaries there. This was the first time that Europe had attempted to make meaningful contact with an indigenous African society, and some of its rulers accepted Christianity and were baptised. In this area the Portuguese penetrated into the interior for about 160 km. But the results of their contact with Kongo were disappointing. They did not have gold, and they were also very remote from the Indian Ocean trading system. So the Portuguese took slaves from the area. The Portuguese did not spread craft techniques to the region but they did give the rulers a taste for the imported manufactures of Europe. The ruling class became very dependent upon imported manufactured articles which could be paid for only through the sale of gathered natural products or slaves. In this sense contact with Portugal led to the underdevelopment of the Kongo.

It used to be thought that Portuguese interference in the domestic affairs of Kongo and their quest for slaves fatally undermined the kingdom and destroyed it. More recent research indicates, however, that the slave-gathering activities were not so disruptive to Kongo society itself, that the slaves were mostly obtained from outside the kingdom. In fact, the Kongo kingdom continued as a stable entity for some 200 years after its first contact with the Portuguese, and it broke up late in the seventeenth century as a result of internal dissension.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century, two other groups appeared on the borders of the Kongo kingdom. One of these, the Jaga, were soldier adventurers who came originally from the Luba region, and who made frequent surprise attacks on neighbours, incorporating them into their organisation. Their activities resulted in the creation of a number of small military kingdoms about 150 to 300 km inland. The other

group was the Imbangala, more of Lunda than Luba origin, who set up the kingdom of Kasanje to the southeast of the Bakongo.

Mwato Yamvo In the seventeenth century a member of the ruling Luba dynasty founded a large empire among the Lunda to the west. This was the kingdom of the Mwato Yamvo in the southwest corner of modern Zaïre. To the southeast of them, astride the Luapula River in southern Katanga, was the Mwato Kazembe, originally founded by one of the Lunda chiefs. By the end of the eighteenth century the Kazembe kingdom, which was still expanding, was the strongest of the Lunda-Luba states. These states were to play a major role in the ivory trade in the nineteenth century and were also important links in the growing Portuguese trading network.

Pombeiros Portuguese pombeiros (trading agents) went into the interior from Luanda and made contact with the Mwato Yamvo, creating a demand for European goods, thus bringing the interior into the international trading economy. Initially these pombeiros were Portuguese traders, but it was not long before most pombeiros were half-castes or African slaves. Both the Mwato Yamvo and the Mwato Kazembe played an important role in the developing trans-continental trade route from Angola to Mozambique and other East African ports, and their strategic position athwart this route, the flow of European products, and their ability to play a part in satisfying the needs of the Europeans, brought them a new prosperity and strength that they would otherwise not have attained.

East Africa East Africa differs from West Africa because of its low density of population and also because of the different pattern of population distribution. The interior in the vicinity of the Great Lakes is more densely populated. Along the coast there is also greater density. But between these areas it was very sparsely populated. Only around the Zambezi valley was there a continuous belt of heavy population linking coast and interior. One of the main reasons for this is that about 80 to 120 km inland the environment changes from that of a mixed forest and savanna watered by the monsoon rains to a region of uninviting thorn scrub. There was also an ethnic boundary between the coastal Bantu agricultural people and the semi-nomadic pastoralists of the interior. Unlike West Africa, cattle were spread throughout the East African interior. As in West Africa, salt and copper provided the basis for long-distance trade, but in East Africa these commodities were located in densely populated areas, so there was less incentive to long-distance trade.

Population shifts The period from 1500 to 1800 was marked by considerable population shifts throughout the region. Although directly behind the coastal zone the interior was sparsely inhabited, further inland, in the centre of the subcontinent, the population attained a high density. The most densely populated and advanced part of Bantu Africa was the region between Lakes Victoria, Albert and Edward, and the Katanga region. The lands north and west of Lake Victoria were dominated by Bunyoro, Buganda, Ankole, Karagwe, Ruanda and Urundi. The heart of Buganda was on the fertile plains northwest of Lake Victoria. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Baganda extended their auth-

ority over a huge territory in modern Uganda. Many smaller states were clustered around these large states.

Nyamwezi There was a fairly well-organised trading system between these states. Although at first the presence of the warlike Masai blocked the road from the lakes to the east, in the eighteenth century contact between the coast and the lakes started to increase as trade came into the hands of the Nyamwezi (people of the moon), who lived east of Lake Tanganyika, in the west of modern Tanzania. They developed a number of major long-distance trade routes and by the beginning of the nineteenth century were starting to open up caravan routes to the coast.

The dhow Early seafarers did not have as many problems sailing on the Indian Ocean as they did on the Atlantic. This was because the monsoon winds of the northern Indian Ocean blow towards Africa in the winter and towards India and the Arabian peninsula in the summer months. Small and less sophisticated vessels could thus travel these routes regularly. The northern end of the Mozambique Channel between Africa and Madagascar is the southerly limit of reliable monsoon winds. East Africa's ties to international markets were via the dhow. Because the hulls of many dhows (up to 1 500) were sewn rather than nailed, there were limits to their durability and size. But even this limited craft with its lateen sail had great advantages over land travel. A dhow could cross the Indian Ocean in about a third of the time it took a Saharan camel to travel the same distance, and one boat could carry the same amount as 1 000 camels. Also the number of crew members required was far smaller than the number of men needed to accompany a caravan in the desert.

Dhow traffic was limited by the monsoon winds and the most densely populated centres. Earliest overseas contacts with East Africa were from the Red Sea and took place in ancient times. By exploiting the south-east north-west monsoons, boats could come from as far away as the Persian Gulf. In the last few centuries BC and the first few centuries AD, Greek and Graeco-Roman merchants based in Egypt linked the western Indian Ocean into a trading network. They obtained spices, incense, gum, ivory, gold and slaves from Northeast Africa. Their hold on the western Indian Ocean trade declined in the fourth century, and for a while Persian naval power dominated the region, until in the seventh century, when Muslim Arabs secured control of Egypt and the Red Sea coasts, and then steadily advanced southwards.

Swahili By the ninth and tenth centuries there were a number of Muslim towns that had been founded by Arabs, mainly on the Somali coast but also in Zanzibar and Pemba. Around the end of the twelfth century Kilwa, on the southern Tanzanian coast, was settled. From about 1200 it became the most prosperous of the trading city states on the east coast.

Each of these coastal settlements developed into an independent state. The east coast trading settlements had a major cultural influence on the coastal Bantu. A homogeneous Swahili culture was created along the entire coast. (The name 'Swahili' comes from the Arabic word *sahel*, coast – Swahili therefore meaning 'the people of the coast'.) The Swahili language, Kiswahili, was basically Bantu with many borrowings from Arabic.

From about the thirteenth century it began to supersede Arabic as the everyday language on the coast. By the sixteenth century Swahili literature had appeared, and by the nineteenth century historians were beginning to write their works in Swahili instead of Arabic. This influence was, however, confined to the coast, and until the nineteenth century the coastal trading towns had very little contact with the interior.

Trade There were so many cities on the coast because there was no single focal point for trade. A mainstay of the dhow trade was mangrove tree poles which were used in building houses throughout the Persian Gulf. Arab traders of the Persian Gulf took iron, ivory, gold, gum copal, and slaves to Asia and returned with cowries, porcelain and cloth. The demand for both ivory and slaves was growing. Ivory and slaves could be obtained from a number of different places on the Somali coast. Because this sea trade was more efficient than camel trade, a wider range of goods could be carried than in the Saharan commerce, which was limited to luxury goods.

Because of the monsoons, shippers from the Persian Gulf preferred the northern ports, but in the course of the fourteenth century the availability of gold resulted in a move away from northern ports such as Mogadishu towards places like Kilwa. The coast in the vicinity of the Zambezi River became a favoured point because it gave easy access to the Zambezi valley in the interior where there were gold deposits. Sofala, founded about the twelfth century, became the major post from which the gold of the interior could be tapped.

Great Zimbabwe There are few ruins of stone buildings in sub-Saharan Africa to tell us about past civilisations, because there was not much good building stone. Most building was done with mud, and with sun-dried or burnt bricks. But in Zimbabwe there are many stone outcrops, and so we have Great Zimbabwe, which was probably at its height in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the fourteenth century Zimbabwean gold resources were probably under the control of the rulers of Great Zimbabwe. By the end of the century Great Zimbabwe had stopped expanding. By the early fifteenth century a new Shona kingdom, known to the Portuguese as Monomotapa, came into being north of Great Zimbabwe. This appears to be the lineal descendant of the Zimbabwe kingdom. The new kingdom secured a large area for itself, and in the 1450s it replaced Great Zimbabwe as the main Shona state in the interior plateau.

Trade in gold It is estimated that between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries about 1,5 tons of gold per year were being exported. By the time that the Portuguese arrived at the end of the fifteenth century, however, output was already declining. Like the West African gold, this gold also found its way to India, passing from Sofala in Mozambique to Kilwa in southern Tanzania, and Mombasa and Malindi in Kenya. At the height of East African gold production Kilwa had a near-monopoly, but by the fifteenth century Indian merchants had begun to use larger boats which could not easily sail south of Kenya. This introduced a new element into the rivalry for a share in the gold traffic, and Mombasa and Malindi became engaged in a struggle with Kilwa and with each other.

Ethiopia Portugal made its influence felt both on the east coast of Africa and in Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia had been very dependent upon its cultural and commercial

links with the Greek and Mediterranean worlds, but the rise of Islamic power in the Red Sea cut them off from these. Christian Ethiopia all but disappeared, but from the end of the thirteenth century it began to blossom again. Although Ethiopia was dependent on Islam for its trade, it was able to resist Islam politically until the sixteenth century, when Ottoman Turkish seapower arrived in the Red Sea, and the Muslims were able to obtain a steady supply of firearms. It looked as if Ethiopia would be overrun, but Portugal, responding to an appeal from the Christian king of Ethiopia, whom they by now connected with the stories of Prester John, came to the rescue in 1541 with the arrival of a small but well-armed force.

Although the initial threat was averted, the Portuguese were not strong enough to end Ottoman domination of the Red Sea, and Ethiopian enthusiasm for their presence waned. They needed the profits from trade to buy guns in order to help ward off constant attacks by the pagan Galla to the south, who by 1600 had a third of Ethiopia under their control, but the Portuguese were unable to give a major boost to their trading relations. From the Portuguese point of view it was soon realised that the weakened and divided kingdom would not be of much help to them in fighting the Muslims. Despite this, the friendly relationship might have continued had it not been for the interference of the Jesuits in the traditional Christian Coptic Church. This eventually led to the expulsion of the Portuguese from the country and by the middle of the seventeenth century Ethiopia had closed its doors to all foreigners and cut itself off from the outside world.

Galla pressure continued to undermine the stability and unity of the state, and by the end of the eighteenth century the various provinces that made up Ethiopia had broken away and were ruled by independent princes.

**Arab –
Portuguese
relations**

On his first voyage of discovery to India in 1498 Vasco da Gama and the Arabs of Mozambique came to blows, and hostility was to characterise Arab–Portuguese relations in East Africa. Besides the religious factor, the Arabs realised that the Portuguese were formidable competitors, and that they wanted to monopolise the trade of the region. It did not take the Portuguese long to appreciate that the largely independent and progressive trading cities of Sofala, Kilwa, Mombasa and Malindi were part of the greater Indian Ocean trading system. The Portuguese determined to gain control of this and also the gold that came to the coast from the interior. The conquest of East Africa was started by Da Gama on his second trip to India in 1502. Arab dhows were no match for Portuguese caravels, nor Arab weapons for Portuguese, and the Europeans soon came to dominate the Swahili states. In 1505 the Portuguese razed Kilwa, which had hitherto been the terminus for much of the gold of the interior; in the same year they built their own factory at Sofala. In 1507 a settlement was established on Mozambique Island, which soon became the centre for Portuguese activity on the east coast. They completed their conquests between 1507 and 1509.

Apart from Mozambique the Portuguese made little attempt to colonise. Although they dominated the east coast their hold on it was very precarious and they did not strike deep roots. They did destroy the prosperity of many of the Swahili city states, however.

Their grip on the coast was stronger in the south than in the north, and in 1593, in order to improve their hold further north, they started building the massive Fort Jesus in Mombasa, which became the centre of Portuguese power on this part of the coast.

**Mon-
omotapa**

The Portuguese hoped that the gold from the inland kingdom of Monomotapa would be attracted to Sofala, but they had overestimated the economic potential of the region. Gold in the interior was limited, and fighting inland hampered its flow. Portugal decided to advance into the gold-producing area herself and in the 1530s she seized the Swahili bases of Sena and Tete, while a Jesuit mission made contact with Monomotapa. After initial setbacks including the killing of a number of missionaries, by 1575 the Monomotapa had allied himself with the Portuguese in the hope that they would help bolster his declining power and ward off threats to his kingdom. But his hopes were dashed and the empire declined between about 1575 and 1666 as a result of Portuguese penetration. The Portuguese eventually ruled the kingdom. But authority was not directed from Lisbon or even Mozambique, and it was mainly Portuguese adventurers who settled in the area. Portuguese citizens carved out huge *prazos* or estates for themselves in the Zambezi valley, intermarrying freely with the local inhabitants. They made themselves largely independent of Portugal. The indigenous population was harshly treated and numbers of them were enslaved. Portuguese attempts to force the people of Monomotapa to open up new mines led to widespread resistance. The gold trade dwindled to nothing as the empire broke up.

Violence became endemic and in the late seventeenth century private armies controlled by wealthy cattle-owners became the order of the day. By the 1670s one of these had come to dominate much of the northeastern plateau. The name of their army, the Rozvi' (the destroyers), soon came to apply to the empire as a whole, while the leader acquired the title Changamire. The Portuguese came into contact with the Rozvi but instead of being able to extend their authority over them the Portuguese found themselves hard-pressed to maintain their trading outposts in the face of vigorous Rozvi expansion. The Portuguese were expelled from the empire which dominated the plateau region for the whole of the eighteenth century, and both the mining and selling of gold became a royal monopoly. The Portuguese were permitted to establish a trading post at Zumbo on the Zambezi, but only their African agents, and not the Portuguese themselves, were allowed to trade in the capital of the Changamire.

**Portu-
gal's ri-
vals**

On the west coast Portuguese possessions were taken over by European rivals. This did not happen on the east coast. Her competitors did not establish bases on the East African coast. The Dutch with their superior ships could sail directly from the Cape of Good Hope to their empire in the East Indies using the trade winds. Like the Portuguese the British also traded on the Indian mainland and so kept closer to the East African coast than the Dutch, but they had bases on Mauritius, Madagascar and the Comores, while on the other side of the Cape they had St Helena. The French too had stopover points on the islands and did not develop any strong interests on the mainland of Africa itself.

Decline Although the Portuguese coastal settlements in East Africa were not directly attacked by their European rivals, the competition provided by other trading companies broke the Portuguese monopoly and the Portuguese empire went into decline. As Portuguese power weakened their east coast bases came under increasing attack by Omani Arabs from Muscat. The Omanis had established themselves in Zanzibar in 1652, and in 1698 they captured Fort Jesus in Mombasa, which was the main bastion of Portuguese power on the northern part of the coast. Portuguese power was henceforth limited to the coast south of Cape Delgado where they retained Sofala and Mozambique. North of this the towns on the coast became linked to the Muslim trading system, with the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, and ultimately with northwest India.

The Swahili were pleased to see the end of the Portuguese as they hoped to re-establish their authority over the city states, but they were soon disillusioned, and Omani governors were sent out to Pemba, Kilwa and other cities. Although the Swahili were originally opposed to this development, in practice Omani rule did not restrict their freedom. The hold of the Omani Arabs on the east coast was slight and control was nominal, but as more Arabs emigrated to Africa from Muscat, the Omani presence was strengthened.

AFRICAN TRADE AND TRADING NETWORKS

African initiatives and rationality

African initiatives A. G. Hopkins in *An economic history of West Africa*, published in 1973, stressed that one should not apply separate criteria to the actions of Europeans and the indigenous peoples of Africa. In reply to those (and they were in a great majority) who stressed supposed African cultural impediments to effective economic response, Hopkins argued that Africans did act rationally, and that the belief that they did not do so was based largely on European misconceptions. Historians such as Hopkins have argued that if Africans did not use the wheel there were very practical reasons why they did not do so.³ Their failure to use it was not due to any cultural or religious restrictions. In fact the people of the Sudan were very quick to adopt any innovation from North Africa or elsewhere if they could find a use for it. The wheel had been introduced into North Africa during ancient times but had been abandoned because of distances and the terrain, which made roads unfeasible. In the Sahara the sand made the wheel impracticable. Although light animal-drawn vehicles such as chariots had been used in certain parts of the Sahara where there was hard ground, the camel and the donkey soon replaced these. Although the inhabitants of the western Sudan and the forest areas knew about the wheel for use on animal-drawn vehicles, they did not adopt it: without proper roads such vehicles would have been useless in the rainy season. Moreover, canoes plying the Senegal and Niger rivers and Lake Chad provided a more efficient means of transport. In the forest zones one could not use oxen because of the tsetse fly. Roads were poor and required a great deal of labour to repair, which would have been a waste in an area that was sparsely populated and where labour was at a premium.

Labour scarcity A central theme that dominates the work of African historians is that, in relation to the amount of land that was available for cultivation, the population of Africa was very small. There was more land waiting to be cultivated than there were people to cultivate it. Labour was at a premium. This meant, for example, that shifting cultivation and the burning of bush to clear it were economical in terms of labour. At the same time burning returned mineral matter to the soil. The most economical way to farm was to use your scarce labour sparingly and your land lavishly. Colonial officials all too often characterised African farming as wasteful and inefficient, with land typically being left fallow for a period of between one and eight years.

Innovations When Africans did see innovations that they could use they were very quick to adopt them. In this regard one may refer to the adoption of the camel and the horse, or the introduction of new crops from outside the continent. This is an indication of the rationality of the decisions taken by the indigenous people. Hopkins writes that: 'Where new plants and seeds were adopted, it was not because they caught the fancy of a primitive people, but because they were seen as useful additions to the existing range of foods, being worth more than the extra cost of producing them; or alternatively because they were regarded as good substitutes, yielding a higher return for the same input than the crops they displaced. Thus maize has spread in areas formerly dominated by yams and sorghum because it gives two crops a year, both of which have fairly good yields, while cassava has become common in yam-producing regions because it is easy to grow and produces food throughout the year.'⁴

Ralph Austen writes that African farming outputs are not very efficient, that the cattle are scrawny and give only small amounts of milk, and that the herds are too big for the carrying capacity of the land. Even where farmers have both cattle and cultivated land, they do not manure fields, or use oxen to plough or to transport produce. Austen says that the reasons for this should not be sought, as they have so often been done, in laziness, but rather in the fact that pastoralists suffer from drought, disease, floods and theft. A large and scattered herd is the best insurance against such disasters. In the case of agriculturists, where heavy concentrations of seasonal rain and sunlight tend to leach nutrients from soil which has been recently cleared for planting, the manuring of soil by sending cattle over it could aggravate the situation; ox-drawn ploughs, which turn over more topsoil than is needed to cover seeds, likewise expose the soil to more leaching.⁵

Opportunities for trade In the course of the next few chapters we shall see how Africans took advantage of the new opportunities for trade. They were prepared to innovate, to adapt and to accept new ideas, products and techniques if they could improve their material position, provided that the risk was small in proportion to the gains. Thus they would adopt the wheel or ox-drawn ploughs if they could improve their lifestyle, but the opportunities for taking up such innovations were limited by the soils, climate and types of minerals available. Although most of the arguments brought forward relate to West Africa, this is one that should be borne in mind for the rest of Africa as well. There have been similar studies in South African history with which you may be familiar, and Colin Bundy in his examination of the black peasantry in the Eastern Cape in the last few decades of

the nineteenth century arrived at the same conclusion: that when Africans came across innovations or new opportunities they were quick to utilise them and were not prevented from doing so by cultural or social taboos.⁶

Short-distance trade

Activities

Most people were agriculturists, but there were societies that practised both agriculture and pastoralism, and some where pastoralism was the main activity. Which of these activities were practised depended very much on the geography of the area. Activities such as hunting and trading were undertaken mainly on a part-time basis. Hunting was most widespread in the forest where meat was in short supply, and it reached a peak in the dry season when game concentrated at the remaining waterholes and demand for farm labour was low. Hunters were not usually a special breed, but were also farmers. Fishing was particularly prominent along the coast of Senegambia and the Gulf of Guinea, and also in some inland waters, such as Lake Chad and the great bend of the Niger in the western Sudan. Trading was another widespread and important activity.

Pre-colonial villages and towns

In the pre-colonial era villages and towns differed from modern towns in that they were mainly places where agriculturists went in order to trade or for purposes of defence. Large numbers of farmers lived in the towns and travelled daily to their farms. Of course there were also hoteliers, transport riders, craftsmen, merchants and clerks in the towns. During the dry season, when there was not much work to be done on farms, people moved about a lot so that the roads were crowded and towns filled with strangers, who were often farmers who had taken the time off to do some trading. Short-distance trading was an important part of the lives of many ordinary folk.

Household production

Although African societies have often been portrayed as having subsistence economies, trade, albeit limited, played an important part in the lives of communities. Most households regarded trade as an integral part of their activities. Even among largely subsistence groups, each little bit of trade that they conducted provided them with a surplus that agriculture could not do and thus had a disproportionate effect on their way of life. The basic economic unit was the household, which was in a good position to mobilise additional labour where and when it was required. This was the cheapest form of labour as it was costless. For most ordinary households goods were produced by family labour. Craft production was based on the household unit.

Pottery

Pottery was probably the most widespread craft, not only because the materials for making pots were usually easily obtained in the local environment, but also because there was no long-distance trade in pots. They were too bulky, they were easily broken, and so were not worth the expense of carrying over any distance. So most households or villages made their own pots. Pottery thus tended to be a part-time occupation, practised particularly during the dry season, when there was not much work on the farms, and also when clay was more easily fired.

Short-distance trade covered a distance of about 15 km, or as far as could be travelled in a day on foot or by donkey. Many households would produce extra pots or other articles for sale in neighbouring villages. Much of the short-distance trade was in the

hands of the women. Although there were permanent markets in the larger towns, much of the household's surplus production was disposed of at periodic markets in smaller towns which lasted from two to eight days. The profits were usually very small, and there was little chance of bargaining, as everyone was selling the same sort of products.

West African long-distance and trans-Saharan trade

Origin of trade routes

Although trade was probably an integral part of the household's activities, there was not much incentive to produce a surplus for trading purposes. Scarce commodities that might have been purchased with such surpluses were too expensive. The great cost of transport meant that only the relatively wealthy could afford goods carried over long distances, whereas goods carried over short distances were not in great demand because everyone had the same sort of merchandise. In an area where cattle were kept no cultivation was usually possible, so that all the people in the neighbourhood were cattle owners, who had the same products to exchange. In those places where cattle owning and agriculture were possible, the cattlemen planted their own crops. So this limited exchange.

The best opportunity for exchange was between agriculturists and cattle-keepers, which usually involved a trade route oriented north-south from one geographical zone to another (rather than a east-west orientation which remained within a single geographical zone) and this usually meant more than short-distance trade. It is no coincidence that most of the major long-distance routes ran in a north-south direction. The pastoralists of the borderlands of the desert would trade Saharan salt, livestock and dairy products with the agriculturists of the savanna in return for cereals and cloth. And the inhabitants of the savanna in their trade with the forest peoples would sell cloth, dried fish and potash, as well as livestock, and receive in return slaves, ivory and kola nuts. Long-distance trade took place mainly in articles that were scarce and could not, like pottery or farm products, be obtained everywhere. The sort of articles carried tended to be high-value/low-bulk items.

Currencies used

Although some goods were exchanged in a barter system, most trade, especially long-distance trade, was conducted in one of the pre-colonial currencies of gold, cowrie shells, strips of cloth, or copper and iron rods. Cowrie shells, the major export of the Maldive Islands for hundreds of years, first reached West Africa overland via the Middle East and North Africa. By at least the eleventh century they were being used as currency in the main markets of the middle Niger. By the fifteenth century cowrie shells were to be found in most parts of West Africa, and from the sixteenth century they became more plentiful when European traders began bringing them to the Atlantic coast. Cowries were the most widespread currency in West Africa, and they remained so until the late nineteenth century. The cowrie was so successful because it was easy to handle owing to its size and shape, it was easy to count and impossible to counterfeit, and it was durable and could be stored for a long time.

But payment was made in various other currencies as well, each of which came to be dominant in a particular locality. From the Senegal River to the modern Ivory Coast, iron bars about three metres long and weighing about 12 kg were a widely used form of currency. On the Gold Coast gold dust was used for large transactions of all kinds, not merely for slaves. Gold dust was carried in small bags and measured on a balance or it could be in the form of mithqals (dinars). Mithqals, minted at Nikki in what is now northern Benin, circulated widely in the eastern half of the western Sudan in the early nineteenth century. There were many different types of currency in vogue in the Bight of Biafra. Besides cowrie shells and cloth, they also used the manilla, a brass object in the shape of a horseshoe.

Transport costs Whether imported from another geographical zone or from abroad, goods in long-distance trade were expensive mainly because the cost of transport was so high. To equip a caravan for the trans-Saharan trade required a considerable amount of capital and access to credit, which tended to work in the favour of big firms, a number of which were established in Timbuktu. The desert crossing was very dangerous and could be made only at certain times of the year. Sandstorms, lack of water, huge and sudden variations in the temperature, the real danger of losing one's way, and armed bands of robbers were some of the hazards that travellers faced.

The camel The camel made the journey across the Sahara possible, but it also imposed limitations. It was very slow and inefficient. The camel could travel only 30 to 45 km a day and it needed people to unload it every day, sometimes twice a day. Each camel could carry between 120 and 150 kg. Because it often took over two months to cross the desert, much of the cargo consisted of provisions for the journey itself. Goods had to have high value for their weight, as freight charges could add 100–150 per cent to the cost of most items.

The donkey The camel was not used very much in the western Sudan partly because it preferred the poorer fodder of the desert, and partly because it fell prey to diseases such as sleeping sickness. So in long-distance trade from North Africa goods would be carried southwards by camel. At centres such as Timbuktu, the camels would be unloaded and the goods transferred to donkeys and oxen, which were better suited to savanna conditions. Donkeys were the main pack animals in the western Sudan. Although they could carry only about 50 kg, which was much less than oxen could manage, donkeys had certain advantages: they did not cost as much, either to buy or to feed, they were faster than oxen and more effective over rough country.

Porters Where the savanna met the forest, another change in transport would be necessary. Trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) and a shortage of grazing restricted the use of pack animals in the forest zone, and goods destined for further south would be transferred to porters. Professional carriers, who were often slaves, could carry loads of about 25–30 kg on their heads and cover an average of 32 km per day. Head-loading was very expensive and was only done where there was no alternative, as in parts of the forest, or where the carrier was a slave who was to be sold at the end of the journey.

- Water-ways** Where possible, water transport was used, but a number of West African rivers had dangerous rapids, or were flooded in the wet season or dry in the dry season. Canoes were adapted to conditions. Some were over 25 metres long and could carry over 100 men. The most important commercial waterways were on Lake Chad, the Niger, Senegal, sections of the Volta and many small rivers in the forest, and also along the coast where there were estuaries and lagoons. The middle section of the Niger River was the busiest inland waterway. It linked Timbuktu to Jenne which was 400 km upstream, and with Gao, about 400 km downstream. Canoes had been active here at least from the thirteenth century. Some canoes could carry as much as 18 000 – 27 000 kg of goods. Water transport was very cost effective, and the middle Niger region became one of the principal centres of precolonial trade in Africa. It encouraged the growth of occupations such as the construction and operating of canoes, and because of the ease with which links could be maintained, it contributed to the political and economic unity of the Mali and Songhai empires.
- Prices** African transport costs were thus very high. In the nineteenth century the price of imported cloth at Timbuktu was two to three times as much as it was on the coast. Kola nuts in the precolonial period were a luxury that only the relatively wealthy could afford. In the late nineteenth century one kola nut that cost 5 cowries at Gonja, where it was produced, sold for 250–300 cowries at Lake Chad (about 2 000 km away).
- Important traders** Long-distance trade in the Sudan itself was in the hands of professional carriers. The Hausa and Dyula were the leading professional long-distance traders. The Dyula were Mande, and were especially important in the western part of West Africa. Hausa traders were predominant in the eastern part of West Africa, moving out from their base in northern Nigeria to trade as far away as the Gold Coast.
- Trade routes** There were many trade routes from north to south. Starting in the west, the most important were those from ancient Ghana and Timbuktu to Mogador and Fez, from Timbuktu and Kano to Tunis and Tripoli, and from Borno to Tripoli. In Carthaginian and Roman times the most important route was that from Murzuk, the capital of Fezzan, which linked Tripolitania and Egypt with the Niger bend. After the rise of Islam the road from Timbuktu to Morocco was considered very good. But it would seem that no single route ever achieved predominance. One might say that over the centuries there was a progressive shift from the western to the eastern routes, but it certainly was not a rapid movement and we should not make too much of it. But as a general indication, up to about the thirteenth century the route from ancient Ghana was the dominant one; during the time of the Mali and Songhai empires, the routes from Timbuktu really came into their own, while from the seventeenth century onwards the routes from Kano and Borno became very important.
- Trading cycles** Trade between North Africa and the Sudan across the Sahara went through various cycles. Initially transport was a great limitation. Horse and ox-drawn vehicles were of no use and the Romans brought the camel to Africa from the Middle East only in the first centuries BC. This gave an impetus to the trans-Saharan route. After the collapse of Roman rule in the fourth century AD, trade diminished and picked up only again after the re-conquest of North Africa by the Byzantines in 533–535. The rise of Arab

power from the seventh century saw trans-Saharan commerce grow, and Arab missionaries and traders were present in the western Sudan from about the second half of the eighth century. Arab influence was able to grow more rapidly after the Almoravid invasion brought down the ancient empire of Ghana in 1076. Saharan trade routes flourished in particular from the middle of the thirteenth century to the end of the sixteenth century as in this period there was an upswing in the demand for West African products in Europe and the Middle East.

International trade Some historians paint a picture of flourishing long-distance trade, an inter-regional trade that did not depend much on foreign demand for African products. There is an ongoing debate between those who play down the effect of international trade on Africa or emphasise its negative effects on African society and those who see foreign trade as the great stimulant for African producers. R. A. Austen maintains that the stimulus to produce a surplus was very limited where short-distance trade was concerned. The big incentive to produce a surplus for exchange, he believes, did not come from the food-producing sectors themselves, but from the arrival of non-African traders looking for specialised goods such as gold, slaves and wild forest products. In other words, the main stimulus for producing a surplus was an external one. A large part of long-distance trade was geared specifically for the international market, but it is important to remember that the way in which this international trade developed depended very much on the structure of existing market centres and patterns of exchange that had been developed between agriculturists, pastoralists and fishermen within the continent.⁷

The production of goods specially for the export market is regarded by economists as a positive development. It generates extra economic activity. The surplus generated by exports buys imported goods which can be used to develop processing industries. Exports which require re-working or processing before being exported stimulate industries. But in Africa very little of the exports required processing of any kind.

Gold, slaves The most important items that made up this trans-Saharan external trade were gold and slaves. The gold trade had existed in Carthaginian times or earlier. Although gold had been mined from an early date, it was only with the development of commercial contacts with the Arabs in the eighth century that production expanded. Most of the production was exported. In the eleventh century the Muslim world adopted gold coinage, and after 1252 gold began to replace silver as Europe's main currency. At first the gold for this trans-Saharan trade was obtained not far from the centres of the Ghana and Mali empires – Bambuk on the upper Senegal and Bure northwest of the modern Republic of Guinea.

During the Middle Ages the Sudan played a major role in the world economy as the main supplier of gold to the Mediterranean markets. From the eleventh to the seventeenth centuries Africa was the leading international supplier of gold. According to modern estimates, at the peak of the gold trade in medieval times over one ton of gold a year went to the Mediterranean. Although these gold figures are not impressive, and even by the seventeenth century the silver mines of the New World had eclipsed Africa as a producer of bullion, it would seem that 'West African gold was absolutely vital for

the monetization of the medieval Mediterranean economy and the maintenance of its balance of payments with South Asia'.⁸ Gold was taken into the desert at the western end, often going to the closest North African ports, from where it would be transported, either by sea or land, to Egypt, then down the Red Sea to India, to pay for the spices and silks sought after by Mediterranean commerce. Gold exports certainly played a role in the rise of North African ports from the end of the twelfth century, and gold contributed to the wealth of the great states of the western Sudan.

The pull of the west coast

Trade vital

It is often supposed that the golden age of trans-Saharan trade came to an abrupt end in the sixteenth century as a result of the establishment of a European presence on the west coast and the beginning of a long period of instability in the western Sudan after the fall of the Songhai empire in 1591. The decline of this trade was then aggravated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by economic stagnation and decline in the Islamic Middle East. One should not exaggerate the impact of 1591, however. It did not bring about total chaos and unrelieved economic decline. The effect of the stagnation of the Islamic world on trans-Saharan trade was more than compensated for by increased European presence in North Africa.

Effect on west coast trade

The immediate effect of the European presence on the west coast should also not be exaggerated. It is sometimes supposed that trade from the western Sudan immediately reversed direction and instead of going northwards across the Sahara, now went to the west coast. The impact of the European presence on the West African coast was not immediate or dramatic. By the seventeenth century, however, most of the gold destined for Europe went via West Africa rather than North Africa. Although this ended the Sudan's role in the international economy, it did not ruin Sudanic trade and industry. The trans-Saharan routes held their own against the pull of the Atlantic coast so long as transport between the Sudan and the Atlantic relied on donkeys, oxen and porters, which were all less efficient than the camel. Trans-Saharan trade actually increased in value in the nineteenth century, and its final decline occurred only after 1875. It was only in the twentieth century, with the advent of railways, that it was cheaper to reach the Sudan from the west or the south rather than from the north. The Sahara could compete with the Atlantic because the Sudan produced other commodities to replace gold, which was now taken via the coast. From the seventeenth century the slave traffic expanded considerably.

Not all areas felt the pull of the west coast trade equally strongly. The Senegambia area was closely integrated into the Sudanic zone, and long-distance trade was under the control of Sudanic Muslim Dyula merchants. The Gold Coast and the Bight of Benin were forest areas which had strong links with the Sudanic system, but were not so closely integrated into it. The major inland states here – Asante, Dahomey, Oyo and Benin – controlled traffic to the coast, but even after the opening up of the Atlantic frontier they continued to have strong ties with the savanna and even the Sahara. East and south of the Niger and its delta, there was little or no contact with the Sudanic

system and this region was most immediately affected by the coming of European traders to the coast.

However, even those areas of the western Sudan with strong ties with the north also had trading contacts, directly or indirectly, with the west coast. Many of the slaves that went to the Atlantic trade were sent there by Sudanese traders. As the forest states became wealthier as a result of their trade with Europeans, they bought more from the Sudan – various kinds of salts, cattle products and cloth.

Hausaland In the later medieval period Hausaland was overshadowed by Borno to the northeast and Songhai to the west. But from the sixteenth century Hausaland became the most dynamic region in the whole savanna region. A high density of population was possible because there were many river valleys and irrigated cultivation was possible throughout the year. A number of independent states developed, with many walled settlements. The area was well known for its manufacturing of textiles. By the eighteenth century Hausa traders and urban handicraft manufacturers had a very profitable network, although the full potential of this was not realised because of the many wars fought between the various independent Hausa states.

Local industries The high cost of overland transport provided an incentive for the growth of local industries. It gave Sudanese domestic markets a measure of protection which encouraged the development of local industries. This was in contrast with the situation that developed later near the west coast, where the influx of cheap manufactured European goods undermined local crafts and industries, which could not compete. So Timbuktu in the medieval period and Kano in Hausaland in later times became manufacturing as well as commercial centres. Cotton textiles were woven, dyed and made into clothing. Some silk, woollen and raffia cloth was also made. This industry expanded after contact with the Islamic world in the eighth century, which brought with it more contact with markets in the Arab and European world. By the twelfth century cotton goods from the western Sudan were well known in Europe. The whole manufacturing process was carried out locally. Timbuktu, on the southern border of the Sahara, had 26 master tailors at the close of the sixteenth century, many of whom employed between 50 and 100 apprentices and workers. By the middle of the nineteenth century Kano was a major cloth centre, as the German traveller Barth testified. He estimated that Kano's cloth sales amounted to at least 300 000 000 cowries a year in the 1850s, equivalent to about £40 000.

Where cattle were kept in the western Sudan, hides, skins and leather goods were sold. Many of the products known in Europe as 'Moroccan' leather came from West Africa. Iron-working was widespread, but in many places either there was not enough ore or not enough specialists to work it for special needs, for example weapons of war. In the nineteenth century the major work of Kano blacksmiths was to make wooden handles for imported sword blades.

This anomaly, that those furthest away from the new outside influences were more easily able to develop their potential than those who had the closest contact with Europe, is a theme to which we return in the following chapters.

Notes

- 1 J. D. Fage, *A history of Africa*, p. 56.
- 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 108–109.
- 3 See for example A. G. Hopkins, *An economic history of West Africa*, p. 74.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- 5 R. A. Austen, *African economic history: Internal development and external dependency*, pp. 17 – 18.
- 6 C. Bundy, *The rise and fall of the South African peasantry*, p. 36.
- 7 Austen, *African economic history*, p. 24.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

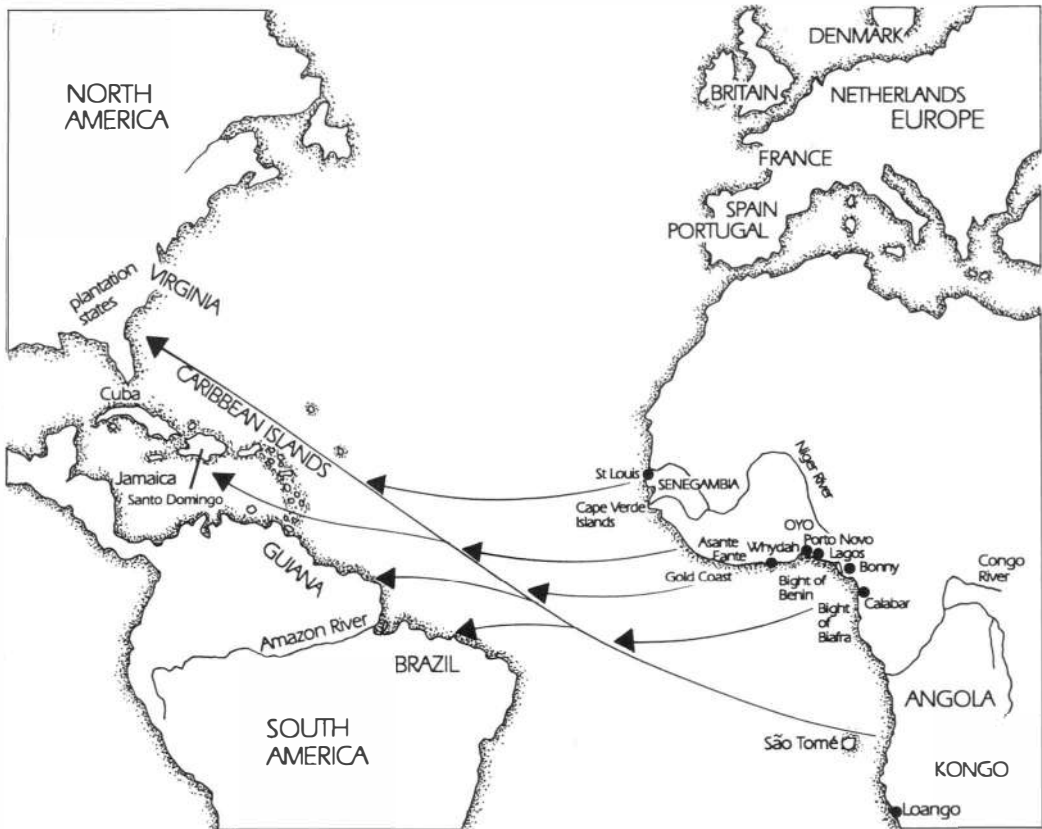


The Atlantic slave trade

Techno-logical develop-ments in ship design At the end of the Middle Ages European society underwent a profound economic and technological transformation, which saw the focus of international trade shift from Genoa and Venice and the Mediterranean to Liverpool, Nantes and the Atlantic. The Atlantic frontier was different from the Saharan and Indian Ocean frontiers, because in this area there was continuous technological development in the design and manufacture of ships, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, culminating in the advent of the steamship in the mid-nineteenth century. Ship design underwent changes, hulls became larger, the ships were faster, sails themselves were improved and made more efficient, ships needed fewer crew members to man, so that by the end of the sailing era they were very much more efficient than either camels or dhows.

Cheaper transport and goods This continuing revolution in transport had wide-ranging implications. Cheaper and more efficient transport made it possible to grow sugar, cotton and tobacco in the New World and to transport this to Europe at a profit. By the same token it made it possible to transport slaves from Africa to the Americas to work on the plantations. As time went by it became easier and cheaper to bring trade goods from Europe to the west coast of Africa. As the industrial revolution in Europe gathered momentum in the nineteenth century, the prices of manufactured goods churned out by the new machines and factories fell sharply. The range of goods from Europe steadily increased, while prices steadily declined. Africans developed a taste for European goods and were thus drawn

to the coast where the Europeans were keen to receive African products in return for European manufactures. To chart this trade and its implications for Africa is one of the main themes of the following two chapters.



The Atlantic slave trade in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries

THE GROWING DEMAND FOR SLAVES

Gold
and
other
export
trade

When one talks of European trade with Africa along the Atlantic coast of Africa, one immediately thinks of slaves. But as we have seen in chapter 1, Europeans initially showed an interest in Africa because of its gold, not its slaves. Before the plantation economies of the New World took off in a big way, a number of articles besides gold were traded, and even after the greatly increased demand for slaves, they continued to be traded. Thus as late as the seventeenth century, about 40 per cent of the income of the Royal African Company, which had posts in the Gold Coast, Gambia and Sierra Leone, came from sources other than slaves. In Sierra Leone exports in camwood, beeswax and ivory were worth more than slave exports until at least the mid-eighteenth

century. From the seventeenth century Senegal was not involved in the slave trade in a major way, and St Louis in Senegal was prominent in exporting gum. Gum arabic is a hardened resin which comes from acacia trees found in the savanna woodlands. It was used in Europe in the making of coloured dyes in the textile industry and in the manufacture of confectionery. Beeswax was as important as slaves in Casamance (southern Senegal). Both gum and beeswax had pharmaceutical uses. Hardware, mainly in the form of tools and utensils, was also well traded.

Cloth imports As far as imports were concerned, cloth was probably the most important item of trade in the eighteenth century. Cotton goods from Bengal were prominent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but by the late eighteenth century Bengal cloth was being replaced by European textiles, especially cottons, which had become more important than woollen goods.

Importation of firearms In the eighteenth century the second biggest import to Africa was probably guns, and in this period arms and powder represented about 20 per cent of English exports to Africa. The Dutch were initially the major suppliers of arms but after the mid-eighteenth century the British took over this role. Much has been written about firearms and the effect of their importation on African societies. The view has often been put forward that this was very destructive. There are others who believe that the effect was minimal, and in any discussion about their impact, a clear distinction must be made about the area being discussed as well as the period. It has been pointed out that the eighteenth-century trade musket was not very efficient in the humid tropics, and one historian at any rate maintains that the main result of the introduction of firearms in the eighteenth century was to increase agricultural production, as farmers were better able to scare off birds and wild animals that would otherwise have eaten or damaged their crops.¹

The impact of the import of some 200 000 firearms a year to West Africa in the eighteenth century cannot be so lightly dismissed, however. The slave trade and the trade in firearms went hand in hand. Fage writes that 'It is probably fair to say that in the circumstances of the slave trade, firearms could serve as a sort of economic multiplier. A society which used labour to purchase firearms could acquire the means to secure more labour than it had lost in the purchase.'²

Origins of slavery and the slave trade Europeans did not bring slavery to Africa; nor did the Arabs. Slavery is as old as civilisation itself. The keeping of captives taken in war has been practised since the beginning of time – the Assyrians did it, so did the ancient Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the Hebrews, Persians, Indians and the Chinese. In Africa, well before the Christian Era, slaves were being carried across the Sahara to the harbours of the Maghrib. Although slavery was indigenous to much of Africa, there were large areas of the continent not affected by it at all – South Africa being an obvious example. Much of East Africa, from Tanzania northwards to Ethiopia, was not involved very much in the slave trade until the nineteenth century. Even in West Africa, which was most affected by the slave trade, the traffic in slaves was only one element in long-distance trade.

The Atlantic slave trade began with Portugal, but initially this was a by-product of other trade. From 1444, when a Portuguese trading company returned to Portugal from

Arguin with 235 slaves on board, the trade in slaves became a regular feature of Portuguese trading activities along the west coast. Cane sugar had first been discovered by Europeans during the Crusades. After the expulsion of Europe from the Levantine mainland, Europeans produced sugar on Cyprus, and later on plantations in Sicily, southern Spain and Portugal. In 1455 they began planting sugar on Madeira, and then on São Tomé, which greatly increased the demand for slaves; it has been estimated that in the early sixteenth century the islands were probably absorbing some 2 500 slaves a year.

**Ex-
change
of peo-
ples,
plants,
dis-
eases**

But then the plantation system became established in the New World and African slaves were transported across the Atlantic. Seen in its very broadest perspective, the Atlantic slave trade was part of a general exchange of peoples, plants and diseases that followed the European voyages of discovery in the late fifteenth century. Europeans took a whole new set of diseases to the New World, and within a hundred years many Indian communities had been totally wiped out or at least greatly reduced because of disease. This is one of the reasons why Africans had to be imported to the Americas when demand for labour resulted from the development of the plantation system. Although the death rate for Africans imported into the Americas was twice as high as it had been in Africa, it was much less than the increased death rate for newly arrived Europeans in the Americas. For the planters, the solution lay in imported African labour. Of course the answer would have been to have plantations in Africa. But there was not very much African land that was suitable for sugar, whereas good sugar-growing land was freely available in the New World. Plantations were tried in Africa later, but without much success.

**In-
crease
in de-
mand**

It was the development of the New World of America that resulted in the tremendous increase in the demand for slaves. The plantation system was transferred to Brazil in the sixteenth century and to the Caribbean in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The development of the sugar plantations in the West Indies gave the greatest impetus to slaving activities.

The Portuguese opened up Brazil, but other powers soon followed it into the New World. The Dutch, British and French opened up new areas for plantations. By the end of the seventeenth century the export of sugar from Barbados to England was worth more than the combined exports of all the British North American colonies. Trade reached its peak in the eighteenth century: the golden age of the West Indian sugar islands. With their principal centres in Jamaica, which belonged to Britain, and Santo Domingo, a French possession, the West Indies became the main suppliers of sugar to Europe. In the 1770s, 160 000 slaves were employed in the sugar industry of Jamaica.

**In-
creased
sugar
produc-
tion**

The capacity of sugar plantations was increased as producers battled to meet the demands for the sweetener from the ever-growing army of European tea and coffee drinkers. It was only about the middle of the eighteenth century that the supply was able to meet the needs of the thirsty. The slave market was not fuelled by sugar alone and as the tobacco and cotton industries in the New World started mushrooming so the

demand for slaves increased, and by 1760, for example, about half of the Virginia population of 400 000 were slaves.

This great expansion was made possible with the support of the government. Between 1651 and 1854 sugar producers in the British West Indian colonies were protected by heavy duties on the import of foreign sugar. The sugar islands were extremely important to both France and Britain. By 1789 about 60 per cent of French maritime exports went to her West Indian colonies, and sugar was the most valuable commodity France imported from abroad. In the eighteenth century sugar was also the biggest item imported into England. From 1714 to 1773 imports from the West Indies accounted for about 20 per cent of the total annual value of all imports into England. The average value of sugar imports increased almost fourfold from £630 000 in the years 1699–1701 to £2 364 000 in the period 1772–1774.

Strength of European powers In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Portugal was the leading European power in West Africa; the seventeenth century saw the Dutch presence dominant, while England and France dominated the eighteenth century. Slave exports from West Africa in the period 1701–1810 reflect the relative strengths of the powers at that stage: England 2 009 700, France 613 100 and Portugal 611 000. In the eighteenth century about two thirds of the slaves from Africa crossed the Atlantic in English ships; one fifth went in French ships.

Influence on UK All indications are that for the buyers the profits from slave dealing were very moderate, particularly in the eighteenth century when, despite higher prices for slaves, profits diminished as African traders increased their bargaining power. The slave and sugar trade did, however, bring great wealth to the entrepôts such as Liverpool, Bristol and Nantes, and to a number of individual businessmen. In England the development of Liverpool gave impetus to the production of cotton in Manchester and to the gun trade of Birmingham. The importation of raw sugar also stimulated the development of sugar refineries in Liverpool, Manchester and Bristol. Liverpool's involvement in the slave trade became really significant from the 1730s. By the 1740s Liverpool was the leading slave-trading port in Europe and retained this position until 1807. Liverpool was well situated geographically; it was less vulnerable in times of war to privateers than many other ports. But most important was its position *vis-à-vis* the expanding industrial manufacturing city of Manchester, and also the more distant centres of Sheffield and Birmingham. Up to the middle of the eighteenth century London had been important in the African trade when over half the goods being sent to Africa from England were re-exports from Holland, Sweden and other European countries. This situation changed in the second half of the century, when between two thirds and three quarters of the goods exported to Africa were manufactured in the United Kingdom. None of its competitors could ship cotton goods, hardware and guns more cheaply than Liverpool. Its advantages over competitors were increased with the completion of the Bridgewater canal in 1772. Manchester manufacturers facilitated the operation of slave traders from Liverpool by giving them credit of up to 18 months. The slave trade needed considerable capital outlays, and patience had to be exercised in waiting for the return on one's money. Slave trading was an expensive occupation and as time went on, there was a

tendency for slave-trading firms to become bigger. By the 1780s and 1790s the trade was dominated by about ten firms.

Econ-
omic
stimulus

Indus-
trial rev-
olution

If one adds the impetus which the slave and sugar trade gave to the development of shipping, then it is clear that the slave trade did provide some stimulus for economic growth. People have often speculated about the significance of the slave trade in providing the capital necessary for the industrial revolution in Britain. The slave trade played a role in the accumulation of capital which helped to get the industrial revolution off the ground. Although there is no demonstrable direct link between the slave trade and the process of accumulation, the trade was part of that complex of economic activities that included the plantations and their exports, their consumption of food imported from Europe, as well as textiles, and the development of shipping. But Hopkins argues that the gains from the slave trade affected only certain regions and leading individuals and not the country as a whole. The slave trade did not provide the main fuel for Britain's industrial revolution. One should remember, he says, that in the eighteenth century over 50 per cent of the value of England's foreign commerce went to Europe. He believes that while African and Atlantic commerce did help fuel England's economic growth in the eighteenth century, it was not the only, or even the most important propellant of the industrial revolution.³

Nantes

In France the development of Nantes gave a great boost to the export industry, and to the production of linen and hardware in Rouen. Imported raw sugar was refined in Nantes and Orleans, while the growth of gum-processing works in Nantes and Paris was also stimulated. The French port of Nantes began slave trading in the 1690s; in 1716 Nantes was one of four French ports permitted to deal freely in slaves, and from the 1720s it became the leading slave trade port in France. By the middle of the century her ships carried about 10 000 slaves a year across the Atlantic, which was over half the total number carried by French vessels.

THE EFFECT OF THE SLAVE TRADE ON WEST AFRICA

Slave
num-
bers

In his pioneering study *The Atlantic slave trade: A census* (1969) Philip Curtin estimated that some 9 500 000 slaves were imported into the Americas from Africa. Since then numbers of people have devoted their attention to this question, and more recent evidence has brought to light shortcomings in these estimates. It is now clear that in some areas Curtin underestimated the number of slaves and in other areas he overestimated the number of slaves exported. But these errors largely balance each other out, and of global estimates of the number of slaves brought to the Americas his is still considered the best. Curtin's figures caused quite a stir because previous estimates of the extent of the slave trade had ranged between 15 000 000 and 40 000 000. Curtin's statement that far fewer slaves had been imported into the Americas led some people to suspect that he was in effect saying that the slave trade was not as important as they had thought it was. As Fage writes: 'Obviously the whole issue of a slave trade across the Atlantic and of slave systems in the New World in which whites did all the exploitation and all the suffering was by blacks must be highly emotive.'⁴ Paul Lovejoy writes that: 'Some of those who have believed that the slave trade had a devastating

effect on African societies have not welcomed the hard look at facts and statistical probability. A reduction of the figure for slave exports might indicate that the trade had only a marginal impact on Africa. According to this interpretation ... fewer slaves might mean less oppression.⁵

Mortality rate

The number of slaves that arrived in the Americas is obviously smaller than the number taken out of Africa. One still has to ask how many slaves were shipped from Africa? How many died on the voyage from Africa to America? The trans-Atlantic run from West Africa took about three months, and during the journey slaves were placed in tiers or layers, separated by movable decks of planks. To fit in as many decks as possible slaves had to lie down on their sides, the head of one resting on the chest of the next. All vital functions had to be performed in this position. Every day, weather permitting, the slaves were brought out onto the top deck for exercise while the holds were washed out. It was said that a slave ship could be smelled from many kilometres away. The loss of life was appalling, although it was probably not quite so bad in the nineteenth century when improvements in ship-building and design enabled ships to make the crossing in less time. Because of these terrible conditions, researchers have always assumed that the loss of life must have been very high indeed. Modern research suggests, however, that although the mortality rate was high, it was on average no higher than the mortality rate for any travellers on long ocean voyages prior to the advent of the steamship, which was in the vicinity of 16 per cent. If we add the probable number of those who died en route to Curtin's 9 500 000, we arrive at a figure of some 11 500 000 slaves shipped out of Africa. The most recent research has revised this figure slightly upwards, to an estimated 11 863 000.⁶ We can only guess at the number who perished in the barracoons on the west coast while waiting to be collected, or the number who died in slave-raiding operations.

Main trade era

The main slave trade era was from 1750 to 1850. In the sixteenth century it is estimated that about 2 000 slaves a year went to the Americas; in the 1780s (a high point in the trade) over 80 000 slaves a year were making the journey. After that the number declined, but hit a new high in the 1840s, despite the fact that the slave trade was widely outlawed. The ban really came to an end only in the period 1850–1870. In looking at the effect on Africa one should examine not only the numbers but also the time span. Of Curtin's figure of 9 500 000 slaves who arrived at New World destinations, about 1 500 000 were taken in the period between 1601 and 1700, and 6 000 000 in the period between 1701 and 1810, shortly after the 1807 British ban on the slave trade. Close on another 2 000 000 slaves were taken between 1811 and 1870, by which date one can say that the trade had become negligible. So when one considers the impact of the slave trade on the population of Africa and its social and economic effects, one must remember that 80 per cent of all slaves who landed in the New World came there between 1701 and 1850, a relatively short period.

Figures in perspective

A few figures to compare estimates of the number of slaves taken out from the North African ports and from the east coast will help to put the above in perspective. From at least the ninth century there was a regular slave trade from Central and East Africa by sea and land to markets in Persia, Turkey, Arabia and India. For hundreds of years

slaves had been taken northwards across the Sahara desert to the Maghrib, down the Nile and to the Red Sea ports. Between 650 and 1600 the trans-Saharan slave trade took about six million slaves to the Islamic world. Between 1600 and 1800 the demand dropped in North Africa as cities and farmlands shrank, but after 1800 it picked up in areas serving the Islamic slave trade because slave supplies from the Caucasus region were cut off by Russian expansion. Between 1600 and 1900 about three million slaves went into the desert slave trade, most of them via the central and eastern Sudan. In the long run the slave trade across the Sahara may have been responsible for taking as many slaves out of Africa as the Atlantic slave trade or even more, because it continued for much longer. But it seems unlikely that more than 10 000 slaves a year ever went to North African markets compared with the 80 000 a year that were being exported on the Atlantic route at its peak.

In East Africa large-scale slave trading began only in the late eighteenth century, and until about 1760 ivory was still the biggest item of trade. Some of the slaves sold from Mozambique and environs went to swell the Atlantic trade, particularly after the campaign against illegal trade in the nineteenth century made it more difficult to conduct slaving operations from west coast ports and harbours. In the first decades of the century it seems likely that between 10 000 and 15 000 slaves a year were being taken from the East African mainland. In 1839 a British observer estimated that between 40 000 and 45 000 slaves were being sold on the Zanzibar market each year. Another contemporary estimate of slaves sold on this market in the 1860s puts the figure at 70 000. Although figures for the period after 1873 are very hard to find, it would seem that there was an increase in the slave trade in the 1870s and 1880s.

**Popula-
tion**

What do slave trade figures mean in terms of their effect on West Africa? We do not know the size of the population of West Africa during the slave trade era. One estimate is that it was around 25 million in 1700. If this is anywhere near correct, the loss of people could have been equal to the rate of natural increase, which means that the population could have remained static between 1700 and 1800. But if these slaves had not been taken out of Africa, would their presence have led to major economic development? It does not seem likely. There was a serious shortage of labour in parts of West Africa, however, when the economy began to expand very rapidly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It could be argued that the economy would have grown more quickly had a large labour force been available – in other words, had the slave trade not retarded the rate of population growth. Acceptance of this argument is further complicated in that certain areas were obviously being affected more than others.

**Demo-
graphic
implica-
tions**

The demographic implications of slave trading on West Africa is a subject about which researchers still argue. The effect of the slave trade on population is difficult to measure. The Ibo hinterland of the Bight of Biafra has always been an exporter of people both in the slave trade era and after it. A heavily slaved area such as the Niger delta today is still one of the most heavily populated areas of Africa, while areas with current low population densities probably always were so, being unattractive for large-scale settlement. Among some areas that were heavily drawn upon, there is evidence of depopulation, as in Dahomey (present-day Benin). It used to be thought that the Kongo

kingdom of northwest Angola had been devastated by direct Portuguese slave raids – it now appears that it actually had slight population gains. It has been suggested that the depopulation of parts of Angola in the last half of the eighteenth century was due to the great number of slaves taken from this region for the Atlantic trade (including those who died in the course of capture plus those who were sent as slaves to other parts of West Central Africa). But other detailed studies suggest that depopulation was a result not so much of the slave trade as of droughts, famines and epidemics. This is true of other places as well. Even where there appears to have been a decline in population, one has to be careful about ascribing this to the slave trade. Natural disasters caused population shifts.

Negative effect on labour supply

The most negative effect of the slave trade on development was that it deprived many areas of much-needed labour. To understand the significance of this, one must appreciate that labour in Africa was at a premium. Fage writes that: 'The basic factor underlying all African attitudes, not only to slavery and slave trading, but to any form of economic activity, was that people were a very scarce resource in relation to cultivable land and other resources, such as mineral deposits ... In a situation in which there was an abundance of land but a scarcity of people, traditional village societies based on ties of kinship and engaged in subsistence agriculture were unable to take advantage of all the opportunities arising when they were touched by growing external demands for scarce and valuable commodities such as gold, salt, copper or ivory. There was a shortage of people available to act as traders and carriers, to work in the mines, to provide the political organization and military security to enable trade to flow freely, or to provide food and other support from those withdrawn from the subsistence sector to engage in these new activities.' He says that in general slaves 'were valued less as trade goods themselves, than as a resource which needed to be accumulated to produce goods for export, and to support the economic and political superstructures needed for trade to flourish. The prime motive for warfare and raiding in Africa, then, was not to secure slaves for sale and export, but to secure adequate quantities of this resource and to diminish the amounts available to rivals.'⁷

The general increase in European trade, and not merely in slaves, undoubtedly resulted in an increase in domestic slave holding. An increase in foreign trade might mean that a society needed more dependants to act as carriers and traders, to work in mines, or to grow food for those who were withdrawn from the productive sector to engage in the new activities. Thus in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries Africans on the Gold Coast who wanted to extend their mining operations in order to sell more gold dust on the international market bought slaves from the Portuguese, who had obtained them in Benin or elsewhere. As Paul Lovejoy sees it, until late in the nineteenth century enslavement was on the increase, trade grew as new and larger markets opened up, and the internal use of slaves became more common. He accepts estimates that in the early eighteenth century there were between 22 and 25 million people living in those areas of West and West Central Africa from which slaves were being taken. He argues that about 10 per cent or 3 000 000 of this population were slaves, and the proportion was rising. To Lovejoy there was a very close link between slavery in the Americas and the

enslavement, trade and use of slaves in Africa itself. 'The production of slaves for the Americas,' he writes, 'also produced slaves for Africa. It is difficult to prove that the Atlantic slave trade *caused* the transformation of slavery in Africa, but it is likely.'⁸ (In the following chapter it will be evident how the ending of the slave trade across the Atlantic witnessed a large increase in internal African slave holdings.)

**Cate-
gories
of
slaves**

There were many categories of slaves. Besides prisoners of war and those who had been kidnapped, there was voluntary servitude. In circumstances in which an unprotected person was liable to lose his freedom, submission to the protection of a man of means was a form of insurance against a harsher form of enslavement. People on occasion gave themselves into slavery as a surety for debts. In hard times a person might offer himself as a slave in return for food. This would perhaps be only a temporary state and he would not lose his lineal position, and his family would see that he was not ill-treated. At the core of African slavery was the fact that any man who did not have a definite place in the kinship system and who was not protected by his family ties was liable to be enslaved and indeed regarded himself as a slave in need of protection. Suzanne Miers says that from an African point of view a man was regarded as a slave 'if he had no valid position in his community except as a dependent of a master or kin group with whom he had no true kinship affiliations. His actual condition was immaterial. He could be a high official ... or he might really be oppressed. His master might have rights over him which amounted to little more than a nominal connection or were identical to those of a father over his son or an uncle over his nephew or he might have unlimited rights over both his labour and life.' Slavery, she points out, served various functions in Africa: 'It integrated people into a society, swelling the numbers of a kin group or a community, giving them greater power or security as well as a larger labour force. It disposed of surplus population, unwanted criminals and abnormal children, who might otherwise have died or been killed.'⁹

From an examination of the circumstances under which slaves came into European hands in the nineteenth century, Fage makes a generalisation 'that about one-third of the slaves who passed into the Atlantic trade may have been enslaved as a result of wars and one-third through kidnapping either at home or abroad, while the remainder had become slaves in other, rather less violent ways – for example, as a consequence of indebtedness or judicial condemnation, or because they had been sold by their relatives or superiors. A relatively small proportion originated in the coastal societies which were in direct contact with the Europeans, and it was rarely these societies which had taken active steps to secure the supply. Most slaves had been brought down to the coast by the agents of politically and economically – and sometimes also militarily – aggressive and expansive organizations in the hinterland, with their focuses generally between about fifty and two hundred miles from the sea.'¹⁰

**Euro-
peans
use
existing
patterns**

Pre-existing regional market structures were integrated into the new oceanic frontier. The European traders who came to the West African coast did not suddenly develop elaborate trading structures. They used those that had already been forged by the Africans themselves. Clearly these worked well, for if they had not the Europeans would have had more incentive to penetrate to the interior which they did not. For the

most part they remained at the coast and goods were brought to them by African middlemen. Of course, until the mid-nineteenth century the health hazards of going inland acted as a significant deterrent, but even so the trouble and expense of penetrating to the markets beyond the coastal fringe was hardly worth the effort while African trade practices brought them the products they needed at the prices they liked.

Population around European forts In the vicinity of the European coastal forts there emerged a class of mulatto traders and agents who acted as interpreters and linked buyers and producers, thus depending for their existence on European commerce. These important cultural and trading intermediaries were to be found all along the coast from Senegal to Angola in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Nominally many were Christians, and they often occupied high positions in coastal society. In the areas where the British were predominant a form of pidgin English developed. Because of a much longer period of contact with the Portuguese at the coast, in Angola many of these intermediaries were Portuguese speaking. Portuguese half-caste and African *pombeiros* (trading agents) from Luanda played an important role in developing trans-continental trade routes from Angola to Mozambique and other East African ports, partly by making use of existing African trade routes and partly by doing some pioneering work of their own.

Areas where slaves were taken Although most slaves were taken over a short period, they were not taken over a small area. Virtually the whole of West Africa contributed slaves to the Atlantic market, but not in equal shares. Within West Africa the main sources of supply shifted constantly. In the sixteenth century the slaves had come mostly from close to the coast, but as the coastal area became worked out and the price of slaves, which had been static in the seventeenth century, increased rapidly from about 1680 to the 1840s, traders went further inland. By the late eighteenth century many slaves were coming from the western Sudan and from the heart of Central Africa.

Senegambia and Sierra Leone In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Portuguese and Spanish took slaves for their island possessions from Senegambia. The slave trade got off to a good start there partly because of the navigability of the Senegal and Gambia rivers. After the sixteenth century Senegambia declined as a major supplier of slaves. In the eighteenth century the only significant trade was through Senegambia, not *from* it. For a while in the middle of the sixteenth century the Sierra Leone region contributed greatly to the slave trade.

Change in balance of power From the mid-seventeenth century the centre of the slave trade moved progressively eastwards. Because of the tsetse fly the forest states had become fairly isolated, and the coastal states in the vicinity of the forest areas the most isolated of all. But the rapid growth of the slave trade from the late seventeenth century changed that. By acting as middlemen these states on the coast obtained power. Using guns exchanged for slaves they asserted their independence from the larger inland states. So we have a change in the balance of power between the coastal and inland states.

Asante By the 1660s the slave trade began to be important along the Gold Coast. The Asante state, which Osei Tutu founded about 1680, was situated in the Gold Coast interior. In Asante the slaves were a by-product of military expansion, and the level of the slave

trade rose and fell in accordance with Asante military activity in the interior. The Fante of the coast, who were dominated by the Asante, relied on them for slaves to sell to European traders, while on their part the Asante needed to keep this route open in order to obtain firearms. In the latter part of the slave trade era the Fante, with the support and encouragement of Europeans at the coast, were able to assert themselves and to resist Asante dominance. But the price of European support was increasing European control over their affairs. Asante attempts to disrupt trade with the coast and to enforce their dominance over the Fante brought unwelcome European attention and interference. Here too the slave trade was not without its effect.

Whydah and Dahomey

Whydah became important in the last quarter of the seventeenth century and remained a centre of the slave trade until the mid-nineteenth century. From the 1680s until 1727 English ships took some 14 000 to 15 000 slaves a year from Whydah. In 1776 only about 10 000 slaves a year were exported and by 1800 the figure was down to about 5 000. Whydah was conquered by Dahomey (the modern state of Benin, so called because its coast is in the Bight of Benin). Dahomey had been made a tributary state of the Oyo empire to the east, although it retained its political integrity. The slave trade here became a royal monopoly which was dominated by a small oligarchy headed by the king. The slave trade became such an important part of Dahomey rule that the ban on the trade and attempts to stop it had major consequences for the polity.

Benin

The ancient state of Benin (which has nothing to do with the modern state of the same name) reached the peak of its military power in the sixteenth century. Benin was not really a coastal state, though the Benin River port of Ughoton could be reached via the land of the Itsekiri and western Ibo. In the early sixteenth century its power extended as far west as Lagos in the one direction and to the Niger delta in the other, but it was generally more concerned with the north – with Nupe and the Yoruba states. It was not involved in large-scale slave trading. It has been suggested that Benin's distance from the coast was partly responsible for its decline, as it could not keep close control over the trade taking place on the coast. Some of Benin's satellites on the coast began to flourish because of the slave trade and started to shake off Benin control. This happened particularly in the west where the Oyo state was rapidly incorporating most of Yorubaland in the seventeenth century. At the other extreme, in the east, the peoples of the Niger delta began rejecting Benin authority as they became stronger and slave traders discovered that the delta was an ideal place to obtain slaves.

Niger delta

The Niger delta played a vital part in the slave trade and also in the 'legitimate' trade that replaced it early in the nineteenth century. The Niger delta east of the Benin River consists of a myriad of creeks, channels and mangrove swamps. A fairly high sand ridge on the seaward edge of the delta contained the villages in which lived the fishermen and those who panned salt in the creeks. They sold their dried fish and salt to the people in the hinterland, obtaining in exchange vegetables and iron tools. In the upper delta itself there was also some higher land and freshwater swamp that was suitable for agriculture. There had been trade between these two areas long before the Europeans came. Until the second half of the seventeenth century, the slave trade here was very

small, but then the coastal societies changed their organisation and structure to meet the demands of the slave trade. The small independent villages rearranged themselves into a number of small monarchies, each centred on a principal trading town – Bonny, Nembe or Brass, Kalabari or New Calabar. This was so successful that in the eighteenth century they became a major supplier of slaves.

Bight of Biafra Recent research shows that more slaves came from the Bight of Biafra than had been previously thought. Earlier historians had believed that the Bight of Benin exported 50 per cent more slaves than the Bight of Biafra, but recent researchers reckon that their contributions were similar. East of the Niger delta in the Bight of Biafra, Old Calabar, founded by Efik settlers in the sixteenth century, was a leading slave port from 1640 to 1841, and as late as 1828 was shipping 6 000 to 8 000 slaves a year. Old Calabar bought slaves mostly from other suppliers. By the eighteenth century she had a network of suppliers extending 320 km inland. The slave trade had a great effect on Efik institutions: it made economic inequalities more pronounced, it led to unequal size of household units, to greater social differentiation as freemen secured their superior status against slaves, and commercial success came to depend very much on access to European credit. Trade and political power came into the hands of a small oligarchy. There were about 12 important slave dealers in Old Calabar in the mid-eighteenth century; by the end of the century there were only three; early in the nineteenth century there was only one.

Cameroon slaves were not greatly sought after, having a reputation for being weak and sickly, but the number of slaves exported was rising in the early nineteenth century, and it became important in the last stages of the Atlantic slave trade.

Number of slaves contributed by west coast From the middle of the eighteenth century until about 1830 it is probable that some 2 250 000 slaves were taken on the west coast from south of the Equator and sent to the Americas. Added to the likely figure of about 1 750 000 slaves who probably came from the regions south of the Equator prior to the mid-eighteenth century, this gives a total of 4 000 000 that came from the West African coast south of the Equator. West Africa from Senegal to the Bight of Biafra contributed about 6 500 000 slaves to the Americas. A further 1 000 000 to 1 500 000 slaves for the Atlantic trade came from the east coast south of the Equator. The slaves for the Atlantic trade from this area were taken mainly from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, after the ban, when steps were being taken to stop smuggling on the west coast.

Loango From at least the 1740s the British and French were buying slaves in West Central Africa, particularly in the Loango area north of the Congo River. The Loango kingdom was very dependent upon slaves, and wealth and power became synonymous with the size of one's slave holdings. The officials who were responsible for trade negotiations became very powerful, and the pattern of succession was disrupted. As the century advanced the use of slaves internally increased. From the 1860s slaves from the interior no longer supplied the overseas market, but met the Loango demand for domestic slaves.

**West
Africa
south of
Equator**

Perhaps as many as 40 per cent of the slaves taken from the West African coast south of the Equator came from the interior of Angola and the Congo River basin. The main importer was Brazil and the main exporters were the Portuguese. Although the Kongo kingdom had long since ceased to be a single empire, the area was still important for trading. It is estimated that by the second quarter of the sixteenth century one third of all slaves taken out of Africa by the Portuguese came from this region. Portuguese slaving activities then shifted southwards to Luanda and Benguela. The Ovimbundu settled on the Benguela plateau between 1500 and 1700, and by the end of the eighteenth century they had established 20 small kingdoms. They were enthusiastic slave raiders and sent armies to the east and south in search of slaves, whom they sold to the Portuguese in Benguela. In the Angolan hinterland, a new people, the Imbangala, came into being in the seventeenth century as a result of the slave trade. They were formed from bands who joined together for slave hunting and trading.

**Slave
trade
organ-
ised by
ruling
elites**

From the above rather brief and selective discussion, it should be clear that the European demand for slaves affected African coastal societies in a number of ways, and that the states behind the coast did not escape its influence. Although the Europeans did not bring slavery to Africa (the institution of slavery in Africa was very old), the extent of slavery in Africa was small until the demand from the West Indies. But it takes two to trade. European slave dealers could not have obtained what they wanted unless African suppliers had agreed to help them to exploit the weaker and more defenceless people of West Africa. As most slaves were obtained through war, raiding and tribute, only people of means could engage in the slave trade. Labour had to be assembled to form a raiding party, which also had to be equipped and maintained. Once captured, transportation of slaves to markets near or on the coast had to be organised, and their safe passage over a considerable distance either negotiated with other rulers, or secured through controlling the intervening country. Slave-trading activities were massive operations, and as such were often state enterprises, controlled by the king, or by a powerful elite from the ruling class.

**Chan-
ges in
social
rela-
tions**

The expansion of states such as Oyo and Dahomey was given impetus by the demand for slaves for export, which represented a growth in foreign trade. There can also be little doubt that the structure of such states was altered, and that kinship ties that were once so important might take second place to contractual obligations. The gulf between rulers and the masses of their subjects widened – the former made profits from their activities, the latter could become the source of that profit in a number of ways. They could be forced into making raids or wars to obtain a fresh supply of slaves; they might themselves be sold into slavery if they fell foul of the law. In this way too the legal system was changed, and rulers who had traditionally protected their subjects were encouraged to exploit them.

Although slave trading could lead to the expansion and creation of large centralised states, it did not necessarily do so. In the Niger delta, for example, which was a major slave-trading area, there was no tendency towards the creation of large states.

Benefits It is often said that foreign trade, and the slave trade in particular, retarded the economic development of Africa. Of course it can be shown that foreign trade brought benefits to

some people in Africa, in particular those who controlled the production and large-scale selling of exports whether gold, gum or slaves. In 1750 the sale of slaves gave the king of Dahomey a gross revenue of about £250 000. Some of the export earnings were undoubtedly used to buy things such as cloth, hardware and salt, and therefore to help raise living standards. But they were not used to develop any local industries. It is clear that far from stimulating local enterprises, foreign trade, including the slave trade, often stifled local initiatives. As dependence on European manufactured imports grew, the development of African craft industries declined.¹¹

**Impact
of slave
trade
on African
society**

Questions surrounding the impact of the slave trade on African society continue to be hotly debated. We may take a recent debate as an example of the issues at stake. At the one end of the scale there are those like Paul E. Lovejoy who believe that the Atlantic slave trade, although not the only factor, had a major influence on the transformation of African society. At the other end of the scale there are people such as David Eltis and Lawrence Jennings who believe that neither the scale nor the value of the Atlantic trade was extensive enough to have had a significant impact on African history. According to them: 'The majority of Africans ... would have been about as well off, and would have been performing the same tasks in the same socioeconomic environment, if there had been no trading contact' with Europe.¹²

In support of their point of view Eltis and Jennings say that Africa's share of world trade declined relatively between the 1680s and the 1860s, and that in both absolute and relative terms, the value of the Atlantic trade for African societies was not great. In short, it had only a marginal influence on African economies. Using the 1780s, the high point of the Atlantic slave trade, as their example, they maintain that imports in the 1780s accounted for about 5 per cent of West African incomes. In other words, only 5 per cent of a person's income came from overseas trade, which was a very small amount. For his part Lovejoy argues that the per capita income is not an accurate indicator of the impact of the slave trade on Africa. He argues that even if Eltis and Jennings are correct in their estimate of 5 per cent, this is not an insignificant amount. 'Almost any incremental increase over subsistence would have had a disproportionate impact on the economy,' he maintains. Lovejoy turns the tables, using Eltis's figures for his own purposes, stating that 'the low per capita income from the trade indicates that the economic advantages of exporting slaves were nowhere near large enough to offset the social and political costs of participation'.¹³

**Terms
of ex-
change**

Were the sellers cheated and exploited by the terms of trade? It has been argued that in the seventeenth century the Africans were exploited and that European traders made enormous profits by selling cheap, almost worthless, European articles for slaves, but that this changed in the eighteenth century as Africans learned the value of the goods being foisted on to them, and began to demand more value. On the other hand, it could be argued that competition among buyers was too fierce for much exploitation to take place. Besides, in selling slaves, the vendors were on their home ground and could wait for the next buyer, but the buyers were more restricted: they were in a hurry and had to return with another consignment. One must not overdo the theme of exploitation. There is abundant evidence that Africans did not accept any form of goods offered in

exchange for slaves. They were discriminating buyers, and if they were willing to accept cheap European goods it was because for them these goods possessed value.

That is not to deny that European traders imported some very inferior, and faulty guns, some of which burst when fired. But Africans would not have put up with inferior goods indefinitely. Africans were undoubtedly cheated, but on occasion they could also pass off mentally ill or chronically sick slaves as being in good health. One can hardly overstress the fact, to which we have referred on a number of occasions, that until the nineteenth century, Europeans were not imposing new patterns of trade but were fitting into existing African patterns. The only advantage they had in the beginning was that they could bring in scarce articles more cheaply and in greater bulk than had been possible previously. Africans decided if they would trade with Europeans and under what terms. In deciding the effect that selling slaves abroad had on Africa, it is probably true that Africans did not have to part with more slaves than they could afford to in terms of the labour and production needs of their society. In Africa people were the most precious resource, people were always in demand, and African slavery as an indigenous institution, in West Africa at least (as Fage believes) originated in attempts by rulers to use this resource to best advantage and to extend it where they could. Fage does not believe that the word 'slavery' really describes the relationship between many captives and their masters.¹⁴

THE END OF THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

The abolition of the slave trade

Internal
versus
exter-
nal
stimuli

Until fairly recently the majority of historians interpreted nineteenth-century African history purely or predominantly in terms of the impact of the abolition of the slave trade. In the last couple of decades African historians have effectively demonstrated that there is far more to African history in the nineteenth century. The question of internal versus external stimuli comes very much to the fore. Professor J. F. A. Ajayi writes that although the abolition of the slave trade may have been the dominant theme in the history of European relations with Africa, this does not mean that it was the dominant theme in African history. In fact he denies this. Western historians, he says, have been so preoccupied with the abolition of the slave trade that they often call the period of West African history from 1807 to 1870 'the anti-slave trade or abolitionist era'. This is a Eurocentric description which he believes 'involves distortion in a number of ways. It seems to project onto the West African peoples the European preoccupation with the slave trade and its abolition. The protagonists of this view suggest or imply that the slave trade dominated the West African economy; that raiding for slaves was the basic cause and purpose of West African wars; that such slave wars or the economic effects of the slave trade were the main factors in the rise and fall of West African states. Accordingly, the issues for and against abolition are treated as the dominant themes of West African history in the nineteenth century, and the impact on West African states and peoples by Europeans preoccupied with the slave trade and its abolition is exaggerated. It is often overlooked that for all the effort of the abolitionists, European influence by 1870 remained limited virtually to the coast. For most West African peoples

and states, the Christian abolitionist factor, if it existed at all, was very marginal in this period.¹⁵

There is a great deal of truth in this, and external influences should not be elevated to such a level that internal stimuli appear as sideshows. To relegate external determinants to the backstage in all cases is equally a distortion. Ajayi's observation that a distinction should be made between the coast and the interior is valid, although (as has been seen) as the slave trade progressed, the slaves that supplied the Atlantic trade often came from further inland. Where we are dealing with West African states involved in the Atlantic slave trade the external factor looms large. But even in situations such as the collapse of the Oyo empire, the case for explaining it in terms of external factors is by no means clear-cut. It has been argued that the fate of Oyo was more closely related to the expansion of the jihad into the Nupe and Ilorin provinces of that empire and to other internal circumstances than to the slave trade.

Humanitarianism in Europe In the late eighteenth century in Europe the groundswell of humanitarianism was gaining momentum, helped by the fact that political reform in Britain, as well as the democratic revolutions in the United States and France, gave the middle classes political power. And these classes were far more opposed to slavery than were the aristocrats who had hitherto monopolised political power. From the 1780s onwards countries began placing a ban on the slave trade and sometimes on the legal status of slavery itself. Britain declared the slave trade illegal in 1807, although by 1800 her ships were carrying over half of the slaves transported between West Africa and the Americas. France's revolutionary government had banned it earlier, in the 1790s, in the aftermath of the slave revolts in Santo Domingo, but Napoleon lifted the ban and it was reimposed only in 1817. Denmark was also in the forefront of those who took action against this trade and in 1805 banned its citizens from participation. The United States took a similar step in 1808 and Holland followed in 1814. But as we shall see, there was a major gulf between legislation restricting the traffic in slaves and an end to the traffic in reality.

Why was this campaign able to succeed? Historians have made the point that humanitarians alone were not powerful enough to move the government to take steps to abolish the slave trade. Humanitarianism would not have succeeded had the abolition gone against powerful British economic interests. Fortunately for the humanitarians the suppression of the slave traffic fitted in very nicely with other British interests and successive British governments supported the abolition movement for their own reasons. Many other groups outside the government also championed the campaign in order to further their own particular ends.

Decline of the sugar market What allowed the campaign to succeed was that from the middle of the eighteenth century the British sugar islands had been slowly declining. Profits had been falling and there had been some slave rebellions. The biggest reason for this decline was competition as fresh plantations were opened up in the New World to meet the growing consumption of coffee and sugar by Europeans. In the late eighteenth century there was a rapid expansion of the Caribbean sugar plantations. Because of overproduction the price of sugar fell. Using modern machinery, the French had brought vast new plantat-

ions into operation, and had caused a glut on world markets with low sugar prices that undercut their rivals. At the same time West African rulers were demanding and obtaining higher prices for slaves, which put additional pressure on European profit margins. Plantation owners found it difficult to meet their debt repayments with European bankers. The bankers had previously invested very heavily in sugar, but as this became less attractive, they invested more in the new manufacturing industries that sprang up as the industrial revolution took hold. Investment here became a far more attractive proposition. The new industrialists were now very much in favour with British politicians, and plantation owners were relegated to a back seat. By the end of the century the British port of Liverpool was less dependent upon the slave trade, and capital had already begun to move into industry and other branches of trade. Capitalists began to reallocate their resources. By the end of the eighteenth century Bristol, the other major British slaving port, was also in a state of decline. A severe economic crisis in 1793 led to the bankruptcy of a number of slave traders who operated from Bristol.

**Resistance
against
slavery:
Britain**

The British West Indies had also relatively declined as a market for British goods, and by the end of the century Latin America had become more important. By the early nineteenth century slavery and the slave trade were becoming uneconomic in many ways. There was a reaction against the use of slave or 'unfree' labour. The new manufacturers said that 'free' labour was less expensive than plantation slavery and also more efficient. Free labourers who earned wages could buy the products churned out by the new machines. As the industrial revolution gained momentum, the production of cheap manufactured goods accelerated and manufacturers were soon looking for markets abroad. They turned their attention to Africa, and in so doing regarded slavery disapprovingly. They argued that if the Africans remained in Africa instead of being sent to the Americas, they would help to supply raw materials for British factories and at the same time provide a market for manufactured goods. Although this reasoning was somewhat vague and idealistic, it added to the growing climate of opinion against the slave trade.

For these reasons slavery became less attractive to many groups of people, and in this climate the campaign of Wilberforce and others was able to succeed. Many British plantation owners considered it unnecessary to maintain the slave trade. In the late eighteenth century slaves had become more expensive so many owners encouraged their slaves to produce children; by 1800 they were no longer so dependent upon fresh imports of slaves. There was a division between those owners who were largely self-sufficient and regarded the restriction of the slave trade as an opportunity to ensure that they would have no new competitors in the future, and those whose activities were expanding and who most desperately needed fresh imports of slaves. Those who favoured restrictions on the sale of slaves seemingly gained the upper hand and in 1805 supported plans in this direction. But the 1807 ban on slave trading went further than they would have wished.

**France;
Santo
Domingo**

Where the French slave trade was concerned, as early as 1748 Montesquieu had agitated against it, but this was translated into something meaningful only when the planters and the French government became estranged in the second half of the eighteenth

century. Planters accused the government of retarding development in the colonies, of being indifferent to the debts of the planters, and of being unwilling to change the French tariff system. In the late eighteenth century the slave trade became less important to the French port of Nantes. Then came the Santo Domingo slave revolts. At the time Santo Domingo was the major sugar-producing island in the Caribbean. By 1800 there were almost 400 000 slaves there. In 1791 in a major rebellion the slaves turned on their white masters and killed a number of them. Despite the cooperation of the British navy, attempts to stamp out the rebellion failed, and in 1803 the island declared itself the independent Republic of Haiti. The success of this rebellion sent shudders through bankers who had money invested in the slave trade, and European governments in general watched events in Santo Domingo uneasily, fearing similar revolts in their colonies. In the aftermath of these bloody riots the support of both bankers and governments in Britain and France for the slave trade waned. But ironically, the economic blow to British sugar interests might have come much sooner, had it not been for the revolution in Santo Domingo which disrupted sugar production.

In a vain bid to bring the revolt under control France abolished slavery in her colonial possessions. Although Napoleon restored the institution of slavery and tried to re-establish the slave trade, the French slave trade did not revive and during the Napoleonic wars French Atlantic commerce was in tatters.

Fighting the 'illegal' slave trade

Abolition didn't end slave trade

The legal banning of the trade did not mean the end of the slave trade. For many years slaves continued to be imported into the southern states of the United States of America. Countries such as Brazil and Cuba, who had been forced by international pressure to pass measures banning the trade, for many years did little to enforce the laws. The export of Brazilian coffee grew tenfold between 1817 and 1835, and by 1850 it had again trebled. Exports of Cuban sugar quadrupled between 1830 and 1864. Because of the industrial revolution there was greater wealth in Europe, so that more people were able to afford coffee and sugar, and their use was no longer confined to the very rich.

Campaign to end slave trade

On the West African coast the slave trade therefore continued for some time. The British took the lead in the campaign to end it. They put pressure on African societies to stop the trade at its exporting end. In 1827 the British established a naval squadron on Fernando Po (now Isle Macias Nquema), close to the eastern delta of the Niger, and began the policy of 'gunboat diplomacy', of threatening recalcitrant or unwilling African middlemen with bombardment from gunships. In the 1830s the governor of Fernando Po, Edward Nicholls, began the policy that later British officials followed extensively, of signing treaties with chiefs in which they undertook not to trade in slaves, and in which the conduct of legitimate trade was regulated and the amount of comeys or customs dues to be paid by traders prescribed.

End of slave trade

The slave trade came to an end at different times. It had ended in Senegal and Gorée in 1824. On the Ivory Coast it lasted for much longer, but the trade here met the internal demand for slaves rather than that of the international market. From Whydah to Lagos

the slave trade persisted until the 1850s and in some places until the 1860s. Britain took formal control of Lagos between 1851 and 1861 in order to stop the export of slaves that came to the island from the mainland.

**Demise
of Oyo
empire;
Yoruba-
land**

The supply of slaves to Lagos was aided by instability. In the early nineteenth century many of the slaves taken from West Africa were Yoruba – this was as a result of the collapse of the Oyo empire. In the Americas slaves from Yorubaland had been unknown before 1750. Yorubaland became a major supplier of slaves particularly from the 1820s, when the Oyo empire was torn apart by civil wars and war captives provided a major new source of slaves for the markets at Lagos and Badagry.

The Oyo empire had been founded early in the fifteenth century and had begun to expand in the following century with the aid of light cavalry. New supplies of horses were obtained from the northern parts of the savanna, which was where Oyo also conducted most of her trade. Oyo coastal trade was not significant, and coastal Yoruba states such as the Ijebu remained independent. Oyo could not expand into the forest because of the tsetse fly, but the 'Benin gap' meant that Oyo could use cavalry against Dahomey. Oyo began its military activities in the gap in 1698 and triumphed over Dahomey in 1730, forcing it to become a tributary state.

By about 1750 Oyo controlled an area from the Volta River in the west to the Niger River in the north; to the east it was bounded by Benin and in the south its authority extended to the lagoons and mangrove swamps near the coast. Around this time the first slaves captured by Oyo began to find their way into the Atlantic slave trade. Oyo's slave dealings increased dramatically in the 1780s, but at the same time its military might was waning, and by the late 1780s and 1790s some of the frontier provinces of the empire were strong enough to break away. Because, like Benin, Old Oyo, the capital, was some distance from the coast, it had little direct contact with the slave traders, and the empire was so spread out that it was difficult to control; here too the coastal people gained strength and confidence from their trade with Europe and acted independently.

The collapse of the Oyo empire was a very important development in nineteenth-century West Africa for it had many implications, not only for the continuance of the slave trade in the first half of the nineteenth century, but also for the development and growth of an African elite. The nineteenth-century slave trade took more Yoruba slaves than any other group. Many of the slaves rescued by British naval patrols and set ashore at Freetown in Sierra Leone were from Yorubaland. Having assimilated European ways and the Christian religion, many of these ex-slaves set out for their old homelands, and these re-immigrants or 'saro', as they were called, had a significant impact on developments in West Africa in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

**In-
fluence
of jihad
states**

There are historians who believe that the collapse of the empire was partly due to the slave trade, but other historians have been at pains to minimise this external element as a major factor in the demise of the Oyo empire. Instead they stress the disruptive influence of the developments in the northern part of the empire, where the jihad that was creating the Sokoto caliphate spilled over into Oyo. Those who stress the primacy of internal developments over external elements aver that, as in the jihad states, internal

dissatisfaction and a desire for reform provided the initial impulse, and the actual collapse owed less to the slave trade and its abolition than to the penetration of Islamic ideas and the impact of the Sokoto jihad. Others see the extension of the jihad of Usman dan Fodio to Ilorin, from where it spread in other directions, including Borgu, as being a result of the crisis in Oyo rather than a cause of it. But it is difficult to separate cause and effect. An internal crisis between those wanting more military expansion and those wanting peace for the sake of trade has also been put forward as a reason. Whether internal or external factors had primacy, internal crises led to the final collapse of the 1820s. The outer provinces fell away. The collapse of Oyo affected all the states that had been associated with it, such as Dahomey, Borgu and the Benin kingdom. The effect of the collapse was felt mainly in the west, where a situation of more or less general war and insecurity continued for the rest of the century.

Inter-cine warfare The wars the Yoruba fought among themselves were devastating. Both Ibadan and Abeokuta were established in the aftermath of these wars, and they were soon locked in competition to fill the vacuum left by Oyo as anarchy continued into the 1840s and 1850s. Although the monarchy was then restored and New Oyo recognised as suzerain over most of northern Yorubaland, real power was in the hands of Ibadan and Abeokuta and a few other new towns. Between the 1850s and 1870s Ibadan looked as if it would establish hegemony over the whole of Yorubaland, but others resisted and there was a period of renewed warfare from 1877 to 1892.

Independent Dahomey In the early 1820s Dahomey declared itself independent of the ailing Oyo, and from then on made a number of incursions into Yorubaland. These continued for most of the century. Dahomey had a great need for slaves for many purposes: for the export market, as labour in the palm oil industry, for subsistence agriculture, and for sacrifice. Dahomey's rulers were so dependent on the slave trade that they had to continue engaging in it until such time as the economy could be shifted to one based on palm oil. So Dahomey's export slave trade continued into the 1860s and beyond, Whydah being its main export route. Despite British patrols Whydah and Porto Novo continued to deal in slaves. Even the growth of the palm oil trade did not end the slave trade – captured slaves were now used internally to work in the palm oil industry.

British interest connected to slave trade British interest in Lagos and the mainland opposite it was directly connected with the slave trade that resulted from the collapse of the Oyo empire. In the 1840s the British used gunboat diplomacy to convince various rulers along the coast that they should sign treaties forbidding the slave trade in the areas under their control. France in particular looked upon these treaties with the greatest suspicion, convinced that Britain was intent on advancing its interests under cover of fighting the slave trade. In fact Britain had no interest in extending its empire, but as in the Gold Coast it was drawn more and more into the affairs of Lagos. So the French, whose traders were active along the Dahomey coast, watched British moves carefully.

Capture of Lagos In a local power struggle in Lagos, one of the parties appealed for British help, promising in return to abolish the slave trade in Lagos. British missionaries working in the hinterland also encouraged intervention; they were convinced that British assump-

tion of power and the stamping out of the slave trade on the Lagos coast would kill the slave trade in the interior and give legitimate trade a chance to develop. British traders in the area, such as Thomas Hutton, were involved in a fierce struggle with 'Brazilian' rivals, who were using the slave trade to undercut them in the palm oil trade, and were also in favour of decisive action. In 1851 a British fleet captured Lagos, steamships playing a crucial role in the naval engagements.

Once Britain had banned the slave trade it was in British interests to see that other nations followed suit. In the first place it did not want other nations and traders to profit from a trade that was no longer open to British subjects. Also, while the slave trade flourished both buyers and sellers were unlikely to turn to trading in other articles. British manufacturers would be unable to open up and penetrate other markets fully while the slave trade remained viable.

Co-operation with other countries

Britain attempted to gain the cooperation of these other countries, but it was not easy as the French, Spanish and Portuguese were very suspicious of British motives. The French were convinced that it was all a devious British plan to prevent the revival of French trade after the Napoleonic wars, since it was well known that the British colonies had all the slaves they needed, while the French did not. Influential French sources indicated that they would discuss the abolition of the slave trade when they had stocked up their own colonies with slaves. The slave trade was also important to Portuguese Brazil and Spanish Cuba. Both Spain and Portugal were afraid to take action against the slave trade as this would alienate the colonists, and their hold on their colonies was somewhat precarious.

Naval patrols

To give force to the ban Britain began naval patrols, and to a lesser extent so did the French and the United States. Neither the American nor the French squadrons were very effective. American ships were often under the command of Southerners, who were not exactly enthusiastic about rescuing slaves destined for the Americas; in addition, the squadron was based on the Cape Verde Islands, which was a long way from the main centres where the slave traffic was being conducted. In 1818 the French set up their squadron, which was based on Gorée after it had ceased to be a centre for the distribution of slaves from 1823 to 1824. Initially the French had between three and seven warships ready to intercept slavers, but for a number of years they did very little because they were unsure of what their government really wanted them to do. Until 1830 the French government passed anti-slavery legislation and authorised patrols, but did little to make either the laws or the patrols effective. Between 1815 and 1830 French slave dealers organised 729 slaving expeditions from the west and east coasts of Africa. Only when it became clear that French ports were no longer benefiting from this traffic did the French government take meaningful action. The French government of Louis Philippe, which came to power in 1830 and which wished to obtain Britain's goodwill, signed a reciprocal search agreement. In terms of this agreement a ship could be intercepted on the high seas and searched to see if it was carrying slaves. Most of the other nations did not like these agreements. Influential Frenchmen considered Britain's request for the right to search their ships a ploy to interfere with legitimate French shipping, and the agreement was allowed to lapse.

Treaties of 1817 Agreements were made with Spain and Portugal in 1817. The Portuguese agreement was limited to north of the Equator, from which area the Portuguese in any event took few slaves. Portugal's trade south of the Equator, where most of its slaves came from, was immune to British interference, and it was only with the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1842 that reciprocal search rights south of the Equator were agreed upon. For a while in the early nineteenth century the number of slaves being transported to Cuba and Brazil actually increased rather than declined. In 1826 Brazil signed a suppression treaty in return for a British promise to give *de jure* recognition to Brazil, but this did not have the desired effect.

Equipment clause of 1835; right of search These 1817 treaties had serious flaws. Slaves had to be actually on board a slaver before it could be detained. So sometimes Spanish or Portuguese captains would throw slaves overboard to avoid capture and there was nothing the captain of a British ship could do even though he saw slaves being hurled over the side of the ship. Later this loophole was closed when treaties containing the so-called Equipment Clause were signed with Spain in 1835 and with Portugal a few years later. In terms of this clause a ship could be detained if it was equipped for slavery even if there were no slaves on board – in other words if there were extra planks for making slave decks, open gratings instead of closed hatches, and manacles on board. Because France and the United States refused to accept the right of search, the effectiveness of British patrols was reduced. Spanish and Portuguese ships flew French or American flags to escape interception by the British. In 1845 the French did agree that Britain could ascertain whether a ship bearing the French flag was legally entitled to do so, but having satisfied himself that the ship's papers were in order the British captain could do no more.

Even the British patrols did not really become effective until the 1840s, when there was a change in tactics. Instead of cruising the high seas it was decided to blockade coastal markets and to take action ashore. The threat of naval action secured the cooperation of many African coastal rulers and led to the signing of numerous slave trade treaties. With the institution of these blockades for the first time many Africans became aware of the existence of the patrols. But this was only at the coast, and a state such as Dahomey was far enough inland to ignore the naval threat.

Effectiveness of naval patrols Although naval patrols could not put an end to the trade, they captured between 1 000 and 1 200 slave ships and rescued some 160 000 slaves, which has been estimated to have been about 7 per cent of those transported out of Africa between 1810 and 1870. Fighting slavers was a frustrating business, however, and of 714 slave ships captured between 1819 and 1845, the joint Hispano-British Commission which had been set up to try such cases condemned only 45. Surveillance and patrols on the west coast caused the centre of slaving activity to move to the east coast. The slave trade from West Africa finally came to an end only when the importing countries enforced the laws they had passed, as Brazil did in the 1850s and Cuba in the late 1860s. In the United States Lincoln decided to cooperate with British requests and finally ended the slave trade in 1862, possibly fearing that if he did not, the southern states might find an ally in Britain. After that, slavers had to use the French flag, but this applied particularly to East African

waters. Ultimately it was shown that the only effective way of ending the traffic was to stop it at its destination.

Naval patrols, attempts to obtain the cooperation of other countries in suppressing the trade, and treaties with African rulers, constituted only one aspect of the campaign. Another was the encouragement of 'legitimate' commerce. And it is the way in which West Africa coped with the banning of the slave trade that now comes under focus.

Notes

- 1 G. White, 'Firearms in Africa: An introduction', *Journal of African History*, 12, 1971, pp. 173–181.
- 2 J. D. Fage, 'African societies and the Atlantic slave trade', *Past and Present*, 125, November 1989, p. 107.
- 3 A. G. Hopkins, *An economic history of West Africa*, pp. 118–119.
- 4 Fage, 'African societies and the Atlantic slave trade', p. 97.
- 5 P. E. Lovejoy, 'The impact of the Atlantic slave trade on Africa: A review of the literature', *Journal of African History*, 30, 1989, p. 368.
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp. 365–394.
- 7 J. D. Fage, *A history of Africa*, pp. 268–269.
- 8 Lovejoy, 'The impact of the Atlantic slave trade', p. 388.
- 9 S. Miers, *Britain and the ending of the slave trade*, pp. 144–145.
- 10 Fage, 'African societies and the Atlantic slave trade', p. 113.
- 11 For a fuller discussion on this see pp. 71, 110–111.
- 12 D. Eltis & L. C. Jennings, 'Trade between western Africa and the Atlantic world in the pre-colonial era', *The American Historical Review*, 93(4), October 1988, p. 958.
- 13 Lovejoy, 'The impact of the Atlantic slave trade', pp. 387, 393.
- 14 Fage, 'African societies and the Atlantic slave trade', pp. 111–112.
- 15 J. F. A. Ajayi, 'West Africa in the anti-slave trade era', in J. E. Flint (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 5, *From c. 1790 to c. 1870*, pp. 200–201.



West Africa in the era of 'legitimate trade'

INTERNAL VERSUS EXTERNAL FACTORS

Popula- tion of Africa

Estimates of the population of Africa as a whole at different times vary greatly. The figures given are often based on criteria of doubtful validity. One estimate is that the total population of Africa at the beginning of the nineteenth century was about 100 million. It is an arbitrary figure, and not easy to substantiate. Demographers are on more solid ground when they say that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the population was declining or that at best it was static. They are on less solid ground when they say that this was due to a combination of natural disasters and the slave trade and accompanying wars. The question of the relationship between the slave trade and population statistics is a controversial one.

But to return to something that is more easily substantiated. It seems that in the early nineteenth century the population of Africa was increasing for the first time since the seventeenth century. This growth was slow at first, but gathered momentum between 1850 and 1880. Perhaps more important than the growth of population was its redistribution in the form of internal migrations and movements. Most of these occurred in other parts of Africa, but in West Africa we have the mass migration of the Yoruba

which arose from the collapse of the Oyo empire. This involved a movement from the open grassland country of northern Yorubaland to the forest areas in the south, which resulted in the establishment of new communities such as Abeokuta, Ibadan and New Oyo.

New trends and processes

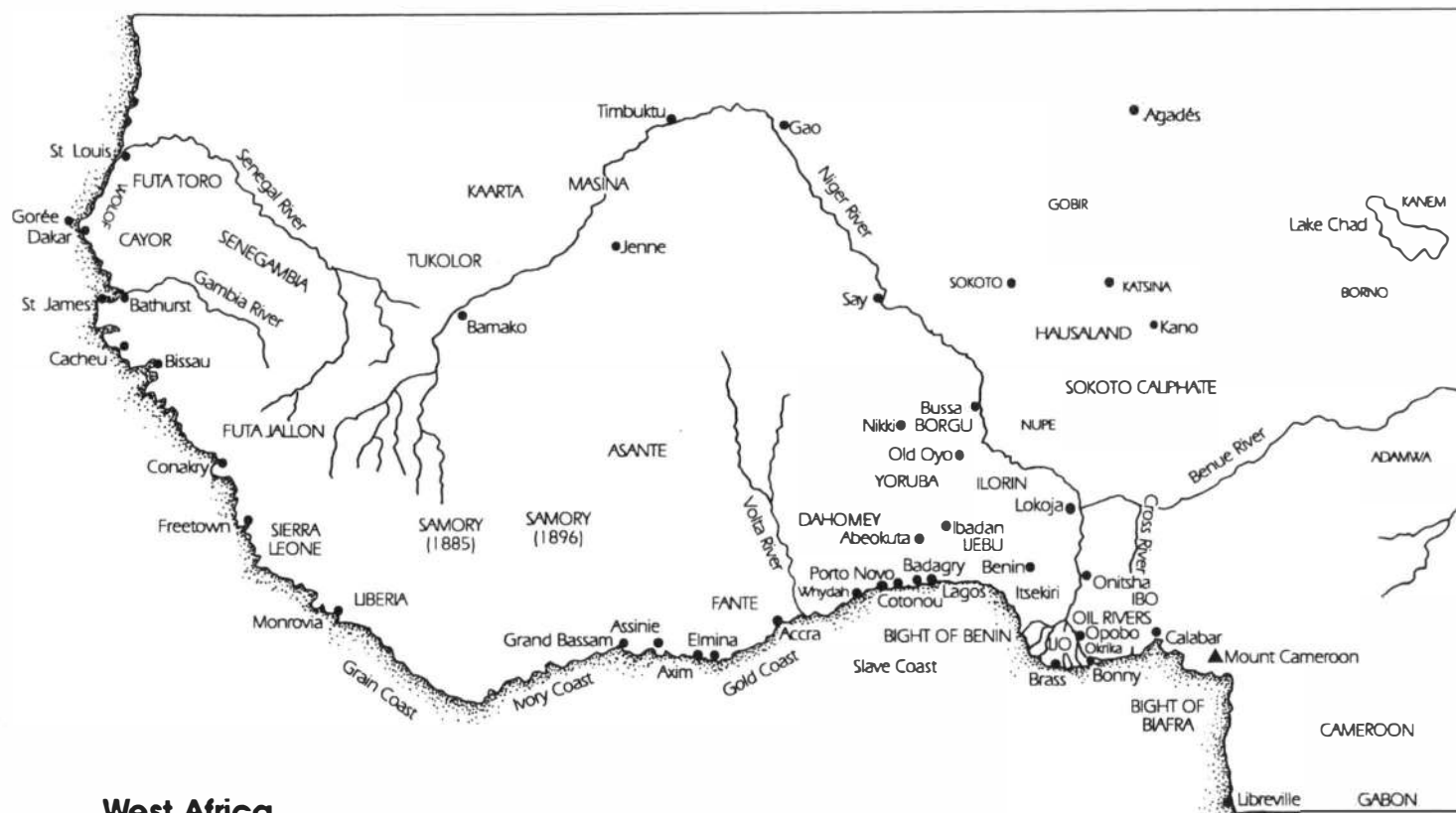
In summing up new trends and processes in nineteenth-century Africa, A. A. Boahen sees 'the development of many new trends and processes whose impact clearly signifies the end of the old and the beginning of modern Africa. The period also clearly demonstrates the ability of Africans to face up to new challenges, to show initiatives, to adopt and adapt new techniques and new ideas, and to cope with new environmental situations. It is equally evident that African achievements in the political and social fields, and especially in the intellectual field, were far greater than in the economic field.' He sees African inability to make comparable achievements in the technological and economic fields as 'the fundamental cause of the tragedy of partition, conquest and the establishment of colonial rule that became the fate of Africa'.¹ Many historians have focused on the technological gap between Europe and Africa and how this widened in the course of the nineteenth century. This is a theme to which we shall be returning constantly in the following few chapters.

Internal versus external factors

There is an ongoing debate among historians about the relative weight of internal and external factors in the shaping of Africa. There is little doubt that between 1807 and about 1870 Europe's relations with West Africa were largely dominated by European attempts to end the Atlantic slave trade and to replace it with trade in agricultural products, the so-called 'legitimate trade'. This gave rise to a system of naval patrols to end the illegal slave trade and the signing of treaties with local rulers to encourage them to stop their subjects from engaging in it. It led to a change in the nature of British and French coastal depots, to the exploration of the interior by Europeans in an effort to find new products that could be traded, and to ways of getting that produce to the coast. It produced increased missionary activity, which was an attempt to effect social and cultural change. But as Ajayi has reminded us, we should not confuse the factors that dominated European relations with factors that impelled African developments, which he believes were internal.²

African initiatives

Historians who have spoken about the nineteenth century in Africa as the 'pre-colonial century', implying that what was important in this period was increasing European penetration and control, have been opposed by those who maintain that from 1800 to 1870 at least most of the really important developments in Africa stemmed primarily from internal factors. The latter group has argued that European strength in Africa at the beginning of the nineteenth century should not be exaggerated. They have emphasised that in West Africa in the first three quarters of the century (with the exception of a few places) European presence was confined to the coast, and that important population movements, state building and realignments were taking place in the interior, thus beyond European influence. It is further argued – and this is a controversial issue – that the main trading relations and developments were also internal rather than external.



West Africa

Existing patterns Numerous historians, including Professor Ajayi, have stressed that the new trade in agricultural produce that replaced the slave trade was pioneered by Africans during the slave trade era, that European traders in the 'legitimate era' used existing structures, at least in the first half of the nineteenth century, and that they relied on the same system of trust. While European traders remained on the coast and Africans brought goods to them, the trade was organised on pre-existing pre-nineteenth-century structures.³ In other words, Africans themselves were opening up Africa to European goods. It was only in the second half of the century that this changed. There is a strong case for showing that Europeans were not generally innovators, and that they often fitted into schemes and patterns that had been pioneered and established by Africans. We saw this with the advent of Portugal on the European scene, and certainly during the slave trade era Europeans remained at the coast while the slaves were captured by Africans and transported along routes pioneered by Africans. This pattern did not change in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Those who minimise external stimuli cite evidence that tends to show that (in West and Equatorial Africa at least) from the late eighteenth century long-distance trade within Africa was growing more quickly than foreign trade. This would suggest that the African internal economy was changing rapidly for reasons that had little to do with Europe. Certain researchers have warned against reading too much into the link between the abolition of the slave trade and economic change in West Africa. It is maintained that the economic revolution that people usually identify with the demise of the slave trade and the change to 'legitimate trade' really began at least 50 years before the abolition of the slave trade, and the impetus for it was internal West African development rather than European policies and demands.⁴

Limited overseas trade In looking at the issue of internal and external trade, in the majority of countries in sub-Saharan Africa overseas trade amounted to only a small percentage of total trade. Although much has been written and continues to be written about external trade, most ordinary people in West Africa were not involved in anything more than internal trade. Of course for the ruling classes external trade was very important and often critical in giving them the means to power. Here the trade in firearms springs to mind. But for the ordinary people agriculture remained the most important activity.

Internal trade routes most important Even in the area of the Niger delta where the European presence became very strong and where there was a good market for slaves, and later for palm oil, 'the internal trade routes and exchange of local produce between groups constituted the basic economic mainstay of the majority of the people throughout the nineteenth century. In political developments even along the coast, internal cultural factors were still pre-eminent: the Itsekiri of the western delta still considered the curse of the oba of Benin a potent determinant of history, in spite of the practical sovereignty and great success in the overseas trade won by the kingdom of Warri by the nineteenth century.'⁵ The curse of the oba was believed to have been the cause of the death of the Itsekiri ruler in 1848. So seriously did the Itsekiri take this that they did not appoint another ruler until 1936.

Perceptions There is no shortage of perceptions on the nineteenth century. In emphasising African rather than European initiatives, Ajayi has referred to 'the efforts of the various African

leaders in the nineteenth century in different parts of the continent to reform their societies'. He adds that: 'In most cases, the leaders were only too ready to take advantage of opportunities offered by the expanding scope of trade and the activities of Europeans, whether traders or missionaries, hunters of game or hunters of concessions. Another feature that stands out just as prominently was how these efforts of African leaders to reform were systematically being undermined by the very activities of European traders, missionaries and hunters that African leaders tried to exploit.' He believes that this phenomenon 'of internal efforts at reform systematically being aborted by external intervention' is an aspect of historical writing that has been very much neglected and deserves more attention. 'Because of the assumption that colonialism and integration into the world economy were necessary conditions of modernization, most historians have failed to notice how much the nineteenth century represented an African effort at self-development and to what extent European conquest and colonialism was a subversion of that effort.'⁶

Reform and modernisation

Reform is linked to the question of modernisation, and here it is difficult to escape the undoubted significance of Europe, which ties up with the technological factor. Attempts to modernise were a feature of nineteenth-century African history in general, although this is most easily seen in the case of North Africa. Although the initiative for much of this may have come from Africa itself, there is little doubt that the European industrial revolution provided the means. Europeans brought not only firearms but also telegraphs, railways, agricultural and mining machinery, printing presses and education. Egypt had its first printing press in 1822, and in 1841 there was one in Luanda as well. In the course of empire and state building there was some modernisation of armies as in Morocco and Ethiopia as well as by Samory. An efficient army was high among the priorities of leaders. In North Africa in particular modernisation was possible only through loans raised in Europe, which had a disastrous effect on the freedom of action of states which contracted loans.

'Legitimate trade'

The trade in substitutes for the slave trade has been called 'legitimate trade' in European historical literature. The term does not find favour with many African historians. Boahen writes that the slave trade was replaced 'by export agriculture which has wrongly, but in a typically Eurocentric manner, been termed legitimate trade'.⁷

PALM OIL AND SLAVES IN THE ERA OF 'LEGITIMATE TRADE'

Palm oil Although, as we have seen, there were many products other than slaves being traded locally and internationally, in the export trade there was one crop that eased the transition from the slave trade to 'legitimate trade'. That crop was palm oil. Although this had been exported from West Africa long before then, the great stimulus for production came early in the nineteenth century from the demand for its use in soap, in candles, in oil to lubricate the new industrial machinery, and as a flux in the making of tinsplate. Palm oil was not all of the same quality. Southwest Nigeria produced a soft quality oil for which traders were prepared to pay the highest prices, whereas the Gold Coast produced a harder oil, which was less in demand. At first there was little demand for the colourless palm kernel oil, which had a different composition from the thick red

palm oil which came from the outer part of the fruit (the pulp in which the kernels were imbedded), but about 1860 new techniques for removing the kernel were discovered in Germany. The kernel then became an item of export and by the late nineteenth century large quantities were exported for use in the making of margarine, a new product; it was also used for cattle feed, particularly by German farmers. Groundnuts or peanuts, the export of which expanded rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century, were used to make soap and cooking oil.

Price of palm oil The price of palm oil began to rise steadily after 1815; between the 1820s and 1850s it doubled in price. As the palm oil trade became more lucrative, production was increased. Thus whereas England had imported 900 000 kg from West Africa in 1820, in the 1850s some 27 to 36 million kg a year were being imported. The rate of expansion slowed down somewhat from the 1860s but between 1860 and 1900 exports still averaged about 45 million kg a year.

Groundnuts In the second half of the century the trade in groundnuts took off. In Senegambia by 1840 peanut production had hardly begun. By the late 1880s 36 million kg a year were being exported. Groundnuts were grown in an area from Senegal to Sierra Leone. They were particularly suited to the light sandy soil and the long dry season in Senegambia. As with palm oil, transport problems made production in the interior unfeasible. One of the first focal points for the export of groundnuts was the Gambia. It was only in the 1830s that groundnuts began to be exported alongside Gambian beeswax and hides, but by the middle of the century they comprised 66 per cent of Gambia's total exports.

Comparison of export figures If one looks at estimates of the total value of West African exports in the 1790s and compares this with the value of exports other than slaves in the 1850s, the figure is the same. This suggests that by the 1850s legitimate trade had replaced the slave trade in value. But this does not mean that in all areas profits from slave dealing had been simply replaced by profits arising from the sale of palm products. The areas that had profited from the slave trade were not necessarily the same areas that were making profits from other articles. There were people, for example along parts of the coast between Senegal and the Ivory Coast, who had not been very much involved in the export slave trade, who found themselves taking part in the export trade in the nineteenth century as a result of their vegetable products. After 1807 even illicit slave dealers did not obtain their slaves from sources they had used during the legal slave-trading era. Dahomey did not have a suitable alternative to the slave trade, so she continued to deal in slaves for most of the nineteenth century. But in other areas, such as Senegambia and the Gold Coast, old suppliers dropped out. The collapse of the Oyo empire made this a favoured hunting ground for slaves in the nineteenth century, unlike the seventeenth or first half of the eighteenth century.

Transition to agricultural trade There has been some controversy about the smoothness of the transition from the export slave trade to the export agricultural trade. Not all areas could replace slaves with palm oil. Some parts of West Africa were unsuitable for palm trees and groundnuts, and others were too far from the coast to make cultivation worthwhile. The oil palm was found throughout the forest zone, and grew naturally close to the coast

between the Gold Coast and Old Calabar, but the major exporting area was the Niger delta and the Cross River valley, which may well have produced as much as 90 per cent of Britain's palm oil. From 1807 Old Calabar led in oil production, supplying 50 per cent of all palm oil coming in to Britain. But in the 1830s Bonny became a major producer, for a time overtaking Old Calabar. In the delta the change was smooth, or so it appeared on the surface. However, once palm oil prices dropped and competition between African traders, and between African and European traders intensified from the 1860s, all the tensions and contradictions of the changeover were clearly exposed.

But even before that, considerable adaptation was necessary. There were new traders to deal with and new ways of doing business. On the whole economic crises which arose as a result of the change were not prolonged. One of the main reasons was that in many areas slaves and legitimate goods were both being sold until the middle of the nineteenth century. Because these legitimate products were already being traded and consumed, the end of the slave trade did not result in a collapse of overseas trade.

**In-
crease
in num-
ber of
slaves**

The substitution of palm oil for slaves led to an increase in the number of slaves required to work in palm plantations and to transport oil to the coastal market. Most of the labour involved in oil production on a large scale was undertaken by dependants – women and children, but mostly by slaves. Once the overseas market for slaves had dried up, slaves for domestic use became cheaper and more people could afford them. Slaves were widely used to harvest palm trees in Dahomey and some of the Yoruba states; they were also used to grow groundnuts and to work in kola nut plantations among the Asante. So the growth of export agriculture stimulated the need for cheap labour and led to an increase in the demand for slaves domestically.

**Social
prob-
lems**

On occasion the increased domestic slave population gave rise to serious social problems. In the delta this had significant social repercussions because a slave was regarded as the child of a member of what was called the Household of the purchasing chief. Slaves thus became full members of the Household unit, and could even become head of the House. With the growth of the internal slave market, Households became much bigger, there were more tensions within them, and the tendency to break away from the main House was accelerated. Competition for manpower and trade led to many struggles between Houses. In the 1860s the struggle for power in Bonny led to Jaja, a former slave, leading his followers away to form the new state of Opobo, which in the 1870s captured many of Bonny's markets. Bonny had to find other markets in an area claimed by New Calabar, which led to the widening of the area of friction. In the mid- and late nineteenth century New Calabar fought numerous wars, against Brass to its west, against Bonny to the southeast, and against Okrika to the east.

In places where there were no palms or where they developed only slowly, there were different kinds of problems. In these areas the slave trade continued for much longer. Crops such as coffee and groundnuts developed but slowly, and it was only in the 1860s that groundnuts replaced the slave trade in parts of Senegambia.

**Daho-
mey**

Dahomey provides an example of an initially difficult transition. Its economy had been based almost entirely on the slave trade, so it was very much affected by the ban on the

slave trade. Although a British naval squadron had destroyed the slave trade from Porto Novo by 1851, Whydah, the main Dahomey outlet for slaves, continued to export slaves to Brazil until that country ended the import of human flesh. Trade was facilitated by the settlement on the coast of numerous Portuguese and Brazilian slave dealers who had been chased out of Lagos and Badagry. Whereas small farmers could adapt without too much trouble, the rulers of big states who had relied on raids to obtain slaves found it much more difficult to do so. King Gezo (1818–1858) had an army and a whole ceremonial state to keep up, which was very expensive, and he could not suddenly disband the army or change the form of the state without causing a rebellion. He continued to supply Portuguese dealers with slaves but at the same time he built up the palm oil trade with the encouragement of the French firm Victor Régis. By the time that the French took over Dahomey in 1892 the economy was based on palm oil. By this time palm products accounted for over 90 per cent of Dahomey's total exports. As Dahomey developed its palm oil export market, it sold fewer of its war captives and retained many slaves for work in the palm oil industry.

In Dahomey small farmers had played no part in the slave trade organised by the elite, but with the demand for palm oil, these farmers were able to participate in international trade, and in the second half of the century they shipped a good deal of produce to Europe. As we shall see, it was the advent of the steamship that gave these small farmers the opportunity of doing so. So the rulers of Dahomey had to face competition from these small, independent producers, which made adaptation for them that more difficult.

The Gambia There were a number of small independent states along the Gambia River. During the slave trade era the chiefs had been able to keep the sale of slaves in their own hands, as it needed cooperation and joint action to obtain slaves and organise their sale, but the groundnut industry that became important from the 1830s onwards was a different proposition. Individual producers could easily dispose of their produce to a trader without requiring the presence of the chief, who lost his monopoly of trade and his authority. Prominent local men began to act independently of the chiefs.

Differences in slave and palm oil trade The above examples demonstrate an important difference between the slave trade and the trade in palm oil. In those palm oil areas where slaves did most of the work collecting the oil, the slave owners, rulers and merchants creamed off the profits. In this case to a certain extent the same people profited from the slave trade and the palm oil trade. But they no longer had the monopoly of trade that they had in the slave trade. Ordinary people could not take part in the slave trade – it needed large-scale organisation to obtain slaves, to negotiate rights of passage and to transport the slaves to the coast. But this was not true of the oil trade. Ordinary farmers could take part in the trade in vegetable products. Peasants sold their products directly and they obtained the profits.

Shift in incomes It was this shift in incomes that is widely seen as one of the most significant results of the demise of the slave trade. Boahen writes: 'It was not the change-over from the so-called illegitimate to the so-called legitimate trade but, rather, the fundamental shift

in the distribution of incomes from the ruling aristocratic elite to the ordinary people that was significant. Since the slave trade, which constituted the principal source of income, was a monopoly of the kings and their military leaders and advisers, the bulk of the income went to them. But with its replacement by natural products such as palm oil, groundnuts, cotton, gum, honey, beeswax, kola nuts, etc., which could be produced or collected by ordinary people, and especially those living in the rural areas, a steady redistribution of income ensued, leading to the rise of a new set of rich people in not only the urban and market centres but also in the rural areas.⁸

Production by small farmers Palm oil could be produced and marketed by the household using family labour, traditional tools, and little capital. The key difference was that land was cheap and plentiful. Slave raiding and trading needed capital and labour, and so was in the hands of a small elite group, often rulers of states. But producing and selling palm oil had no such barriers. For the first time small farmers could play an important role in the export market. In the eighteenth century land had been largely ignored, except for domestic use, and the labour had been exported. Now the land was being used for the export market and labour was being used commercially. In 1892 it was estimated that in Yoruba country alone oil for the export market was being obtained from 15 million palm trees. This provided quite a few additional employment opportunities for the people who had access to the coast.

Nature of the transition Under these circumstances it is difficult to make generalisations about the nature of the transition from the slave trade to 'legitimate trade'. Prior to the 1970s the conventional view was that the transition was smooth. In his analysis of the economic history of West Africa, A. G. Hopkins in 1973 took the view that the change-over from the slave trade to legitimate trade in West Africa was not so smooth at all, that tensions existed from the early nineteenth century, but that they became acute only in the late nineteenth century, and were then aggravated by a downturn in trade. He focused on this situation as a vital ingredient in the European partition of the continent.⁹

FOREIGN TRADE AND AFRICAN ECONOMIES

Pattern of imports How did the pattern of imports change after the abolition of the slave trade? Textiles (cotton and woollen goods), liquor (rum and gin in particular), salt, iron, tobacco, and guns and gunpowder accounted for a large proportion of the imports into West Africa. Although most of these articles had been imported during the slave trade era, by the middle of the nineteenth century the quantity coming in was much greater and the prices had dropped considerably. The quantity of cotton goods coming into West Africa from Britain in the period 1816–1820 had increased 30 times by 1846–1850. More people were participating in and obtaining profits from trade in agricultural products than had ever been the case with the slave trade. This meant that there was a bigger market for European manufactured goods. It is very important to note that while the prices and volumes of certain African products were rising fast, prices of European goods coming into Africa were not increasing nearly as quickly. In the case of cotton textiles, which were now mass-produced by machines, the prices declined. This means that from the late eighteenth century to about 1860 terms of trade shifted in favour of West Africa.

Effects of imports on local economies

Africans became increasingly locked into the world economy, but the change did not provide strong points from which African economies could grow. The main European imports, which were cloth, alcohol and firearms, did not help African economies develop local points of growth. Because cheaper manufactured cotton goods flooded the African market (goods that required no re-working) local industry was discouraged. Local producers could not compete with the cheap imported articles. European shipping could bring a range of finished articles ready for consumption to the West African coast, and it could do so at a cost with which indigenous African handicraft could not compete. Of course some imported goods did need re-working. Local craftsmen could use iron and copper bars to make the sort of hoes, handles and implements that were needed locally, or dye cloth certain colours with special designs. In areas where African products could not compete with imported ones, they did not make any technological progress. Thus African blacksmiths made tools from inferior imported iron bars rather than high-quality products from local deposits.

In those parts of West Africa that were drawn more to the trans-Saharan trade routes and markets in North Africa than towards the Atlantic coastline, because of the cost of transporting goods across the Sahara from North Africa, mass-produced goods from Europe were more expensive than in the coastal region of West Africa, so local craft industries were able to flourish. It is ironic that in West Africa, where the contact with Europe was closest, African development should in many ways have been more limited than in the West African Sudan. Local crafts had a better chance of surviving far from the threat of cheap imported goods. They had a measure of protection. One thinks of the flourishing textile industry in Hausaland. Lancashire exports were unable to make much progress here. The local cotton textile industry was both sophisticated and resilient. The peoples of the region had very definite likes and dislikes and these varied from place to place. Local designs and colours were intricate and had been created to meet the specific requirements of the purchasers. Local producers had geared themselves for this market, so that it was difficult for outsiders to break into it.

Underdevelopment

Foreign trade did not transform the economy. In general trade with Europe consumed African natural resources – gold, ivory and slaves were among the first. These were replaced with cheap expendable consumer goods, which did not help Africa to develop an infrastructure. Sierra Leone's fine forest trees went to build British ships. Gradually the country became deforested; the secondary bush that grew up was useless for export. By the 1860s there was little suitable wood left. Sierra Leone would in any case have lost its market, because the demand for timber declined as iron ships replaced wooden ones.

No other industries

The palm industry did not lead to any new industries either. Oil palm trees grew wild, particularly around cleared areas, so farmers could do the clearing and weeding as they went about their other tasks. The gathering of oil required no new techniques. It took some trouble to extract the oil or kernel but women could do this in addition to their other normal tasks. The major activity connected with the palm oil trade was to bulk it and transport it to the coast. Peanut production required the full attention of farmers in their main cultivation season, but it needed no new techniques. It did not lead to the establishment of any factories or industries. So Africa remained a primary exporter, and

did not enter the field of processing its exports. This was to prove fatal when the terms of trade later turned against primary producers in the second half of the nineteenth century.

**Decline
in oil
prices**

But for the moment there seemed no cause for undue concern. By mid-century palm oil prices were still in an upward trend except for falls between 1844 and 1846 and between 1851 and 1852. Prices peaked in 1854–1861 when the Liverpool price for palm oil was around £45 a ton. Because the price of imported goods was decreasing (by 1850 some imported articles cost between a half and a quarter of what they had cost at the beginning of the century) these were prosperous years for West Africa. Then came the drop in oil prices as gas and electric lighting were developed, zinc chloride began to be used as a flux in the manufacturing of tinsplate, peanut oil took over some functions of palm oil, and petroleum resources (which had been discovered in the United States in the 1860s) took over other functions. In the second half of the nineteenth century the Senegalese gum trade declined because of the development of chemical substitutes and the growth of the Egyptian gum trade. In addition, Africa was no longer the only place where vegetable products could be obtained. The steamship opened up new areas of the world. 'By the mid nineteenth century,' Hopkins writes, 'the silent imperialism of the steamship was beginning to bring vegetable oils and substitute products from other continents besides Africa.'¹⁰ After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which led to a fall in freight rates, Indian groundnuts and Australian tallow came onto the market.

By then steamboats were a regular feature of the lower Niger, trading to its junction with the Benue and beyond. So steamboats came to the palm-producing regions that had hitherto been served by Ibo canoe routes, cutting out African middlemen. In 1862 the price of palm oil began to decline. The European price of palm oil fell to £32 per ton in the depression of 1862–1866. Although prices revived again, they did not reach the peaks of 1854–1861 again until 1906. From the 1870s there was a major depression in Europe, which also meant a reduced demand for oils. In 1886–1890 the price fell to £20 per ton. Palm kernel prices fell by about a third to £10 a ton, and so did groundnut prices, and neither recovered until after the turn of the century.

**Problems of
primary
production**

Africans experimented with crops on their own and they were quick to adapt when they were able to do so. Thus Sierra Leone's large timber exports up to the 1830s gave way to gold, groundnuts and palm oil by 1860; by 1880 palm kernels were the main export. In the Gold Coast and Nigeria in the 1880s, cocoa farming was undertaken to overcome economic problems. So they adapted well to the demands of the world market. But the truth was that terms of trade no longer favoured primary producers. And there was little they could do about that. Perhaps if there had been technical improvements in agriculture or improved communications such as railways, it would have been possible to increase the volume of production in an economic way. Without such improvements the only possible increase was through the recruitment of more producers, which would not increase the per capita income, or through the growth of the labour supply, which was an expensive alternative. Ralph Austen asserts that the drop in prices was more critical for the European traders than for the African suppliers of palm oil as the traders 'entire existence depended upon the continuation of such

commerce'.¹¹ African merchants and producers, on the other hand, could simply drop out of the market until conditions improved. In the 1880s the Yoruba closed their markets on more than one occasion, and in 1886–1887 the Itsekiri withheld palm oil from the market in an attempt to force the Europeans to trade on their terms. Temporary withdrawal from the market was thus possible, but in general African traders were at the mercy of the same market forces as the European traders.

THE STEAMSHIP

Advent of the steamship

The decline in prices coincided with another major change in trading relationships between West Africa and Europe. This was the advent of the steamship. The development of the steamship was part of the industrial revolution to which we have referred in various places in this chapter. If there was one single innovation that acted as a catalyst for major change in African trading relationships and ultimately in political relationships as well, it was the steamship. Steamships had first been employed in West Africa by Macgregor Laird when he sent two paddle steamers up the Niger in 1832. Despite this early start the steamship did not quickly replace sail, and for long voyages in areas where there were regular winds, as in the China tea trade, sail remained more popular than steam until late in the century. Steamers began to replace sailing ships in the anti-slavery naval squadron in 1841, but at first they were not so effective because they consumed large quantities of fuel and coaling facilities on the coast were sparse. But technological developments soon made steam a better prospect. About 1860 the high pressure compound engine was developed by Alfred Holt, which significantly reduced the fuel consumption of steamships. In the 1870s the triple expansion engine was developed.

Services to Africa

Laird's company, the African Steam Ship Company, was formed in England in 1851 and began a regular monthly service to West Africa in 1852 after it had obtained the government's West African mail contract. The British and African Steam Navigation Company was established in 1868. A consortium of Bordeaux and Marseilles firms ran steamships to West Africa in the 1870s, before the Fabre-Fraissinet Line was created in 1889. In the 1870s the German firm of Woermann was also running steamers to West Africa. In 1880 only a third of the ships entering Lagos harbour were under sail, and in terms of the tonnage, sailing ships accounted for only one sixth of the total. A steamship could complete the voyage to West Africa in less than a month, whereas the round trip could often take a sailing ship anything between six and twelve months. Sailing ships spent a good deal of time collecting a cargo in West Africa; beating up the coast in order to call in at a number of ports was a lengthy business. It was much easier for steamships to call in at ports on their way to the Niger delta.

Changes

The advent of the steamship brought many changes. Goods could be transported more cheaply, so that cargoes did not have to be confined so much to high-value items of low bulk. If necessary, soldiers could be transported more easily to trouble spots. The first result was that more European traders established themselves on the coast. With them came missionaries and educated African ex-slaves who thus swelled the already heterogeneous communities that had developed at the coastal posts. These little expatriate

communities attracted the disaffected of all kinds, whether slaves wanting freedom or cliques needing support in intrigues against rivals or rulers. These little communities had the potential to destabilise the region, and because the Europeans were the main suppliers of capital, and the only source of access to firearms, they became powerful figures.

Local currencies Technological advances in Europe made the production of manillas and iron currencies much cheaper, and in mid-century new sources of cowrie shells were located on the east coast of Africa. Because it made transport of these articles to West Africa so much easier and cheaper, the steamship played a vital role in bringing about a serious devaluation in these articles. European merchants began to flood West Africa with these currencies, which resulted in their depreciation in the second half of the nineteenth century. By the end of the century iron and copper currencies as well as cowrie shells had ceased to play a meaningful role in external trade. They were replaced largely by British and French silver coins.

British and French coins In the long term the change to French francs and British florins and shillings widened the basis of trade. The introduction of the steamship gave more opportunities for small European traders, who had no previous experience of West Africa, to enter the market. Before the steamship the older, established firms had controlled the market because they monopolised cargo space on the sailing ships. With the introduction of regular steamship services, individual traders could hire cargo space, and so enter the West African market. These new traders were assisted by the decline of cowrie shells. The use of cowrie shells had been a bar to entry into this market, because the shells could be obtained only from established firms or by barter, and when the traders went back to Europe they could not exchange the shells.

New traders In the 1840s, before the advent of the steamer, the export of palm oil was in the hands of about ten large-scale Liverpool oil traders, while another 10–15 smaller firms traded in a range of goods, including oil, although not on a regular basis. Large-scale traders used their own sailing ships or chartered ships, relying on the high cost of entry to keep out competitors. The steamship changed this. Trading and transport became separated. African trade was open to any trader who hired cargo space on a steamship. It became much easier for small scale traders to enter the trade. In addition to the new European traders who entered the West African trade scene, the established firms were also fighting competition from small African firms, which included many from Sierra Leone. At this stage some of these firms were as large as European firms. An example of this new generation of trader was Richard Blaize (1845–1904) who left Freetown in 1862 and made his business career in Lagos. Afro-Europeans or Creoles benefited from the opening up of trade by the steamship but they never became wealthy and did not establish bases in Europe. They did not have much capital so they could not really enter the export business. They were engaged mainly in the import and retail trade. These new traders poured into the West African trade in the 1850s. The big-name old traders had a difficult time. They tried to crush the new arrivals, but without much success, and many of the old trading companies collapsed.

- Competition among traders** As prices continued to be subjected to downward pressure and a general depression tightened its grip on Europe from about 1874, there was a great struggle for survival between oil traders. This led to a new development that was eventually to have grave consequences for African traders. As early as 1863 a number of firms had joined together to form the Company of African Merchants. Further amalgamations followed. In 1879 George Taubman (known as George Goldie), an eccentric ex-army officer, succeeded in amalgamating the British firms into the United African Company. In 1889 the nine remaining major oil traders were amalgamated and became the African Association. By the late 1880s these large companies were effectively squeezing out many of the small African traders, who lacked access to European banking circles in order to obtain credit to run large operations.
- Crooked practices** Although the Niger region remained the biggest producer of palm oil, by the 1840s other areas were also exporting more oil. After 1852 the steamship services facilitated this by calling at a greater number of ports on the coast. So competition was increased. As the dispute over reduced profits became increasingly bitter, the incidence of crooked practices mushroomed. There were more instances of palm oil being diluted, and of less cloth being measured out than had actually been sold. European firms tried to move inland and cut out the middlemen, while the latter resisted this. There were also attempts by Africans to sell their products directly to Europe, and it was Jaja's threat to do this that was largely responsible for his expulsion from Opobo in 1887. Africans withheld produce in order to force Europeans to trade on their terms.
- Cutting costs** Primary producers and traders alike found themselves in a desperate search for alternative exports and for ways of cutting down expenses. We have said before that the development of legitimate commerce did not transform trading structures, but followed patterns laid down during the slave trade era. The changed circumstances now caused Europeans to rethink their relationship with West Africa. The policy of limited intervention in West Africa was about to collapse. In order to reduce their own costs European traders tried to cut out African middlemen and also European rivals. They were about to move into the interior to trade directly with the producers. This heightened competition was to prepare the way for the scramble for Africa.
- Political role of the steamship** Besides its effect on revolutionising trading patterns, the steamship also played a role in political developments, although this is not always easy to chart precisely. We can easily show that the steamer played a major role in naval operations as in the invasion of Lagos in 1851, but in other cases its effect is less obvious. Whitehall civil servants promoted the use of steamers, believing that they could help prevent local disasters which could have repercussions on their own careers. The steamer gave increased mobility and fire power, and European officials who used it gained the respect of the locals. The governor's prestige would be far higher if he arrived to negotiate with chiefs in a steamship rather than a decrepit sailing ship.
- By the 1840s West African administrators were asking for steam vessels of their own. By 1874 there was a total of ten steamships spread among British administrations of West African settlements. It is difficult to pinpoint the significance of the steamship for the furtherance of European imperial interests in Africa. But there can be little doubt

that it did put some muscle into the hands of the men on the spot. As R. V. Kubicek phrases it: 'Whitehall's enthusiasm for the steamboat placed an effective or potentially effective means of coercion at the disposal of imperial enforcers in the 1840s, 1850s, 1860s and 1870s when the central state itself was unwilling to adopt an expansionist policy. Faced in the 1880s and 1890s by colonial rivals, Whitehall and Westminster simply fell in with, and furthered the initiative of, local agents who, convinced by both the real and imagined potential of this tool of empire, had already begun the conquest decades before.'¹²

THE GROWING EUROPEAN PRESENCE

European power limited

By 1800 the European presence was confined largely to a few coastal trading stations or factories. One should not exaggerate European influence at the beginning of the century, and even in military terms they did not enjoy overwhelming superiority. While Europeans may have had superior arms and better military discipline, the Africans had the advantage of numbers as well as an intimate acquaintance with the terrain. Where the Europeans did enjoy great superiority was in naval power on the coast. Later in the century they would venture up the rivers, but in the early nineteenth century their superiority was limited to the coast. Even in the lakes and creeks and rivers, African canoes had an advantage over sailing ships.

The British in Gambia

After 1815 the European trading posts began to alter their character. In some cases this was because of the campaign to end the illegal slave trade. Thus, although British traders had been active in the Gambia since the seventeenth century, in 1816 the need for a base from which to operate against slavers resulted in the establishment of a more formal British presence with the founding of Bathurst at the mouth of the Gambia River. By the middle of the nineteenth century British traders, prominent among whom were Creoles from Sierra Leone, had developed a solid trade in groundnuts with the river peoples. But the British had no interest in increasing their authority in Gambia. They wanted trade, not colonies. Where they intervened in conflicts they did so purely in order to protect trade.

Gold Coast

The Danes, Dutch and British had posts on the Gold Coast. Although the British had no real interest in the interior they could not ignore it, because the powerful Asante, in the forest area of central Ghana, wanted to assert their dominance over the small Fante states near the coast close to the British trading stations. During the slave trade era the Fante had relied on the Asante to provide them with slaves to sell. But now they produced kernels and oil for export and thus no longer had to rely on the Asante. The Asante, however, needed access to the coast in order to obtain firearms to conduct slave raids effectively. After the slave trade era they extended their kola nut trade with the north, which meant that they needed additional slaves to work in the plantations. One of the greatest Asantehenes of the Asante, Osei Bonsu (1801–1824), undertook a series of campaigns against the Fante of the coast in 1807, 1811 and 1814 in order to keep Asante lines to the coast open for the firearms they imported.

British protection of the Fante Once the Napoleonic wars had ended and Britain could again give its full attention to the region, it extended its protection to the Fante. The Fante relied on the British to protect them, and Asante attacks near the coast disrupted trade by keeping the Fante and the British traders in a state of alarm. For many years British action was half-hearted and until the 1840s the government hesitated about whether to abandon the region to private enterprise or to assume formal control herself. In the meantime the Fante appealed to the British not only for protection against the Asante, but also to arbitrate in their many internal disputes. This increasing British involvement in the affairs of the Fante led to the 1844 treaty in which the Fante chiefs recognised British jurisdiction and agreed that criminal cases should be dealt with by British officials working in conjunction with the chiefs. By the 1870s much of the Fante trade had come into the hands of Europeans who took over ailing Fante concerns.

British relations with the Asante British relations with the Asante remained uneasy. The British takeover of the Dutch fort of Elmina in 1871–1872 led to a severe crisis in the Asante economy; an Asante attack on British-controlled territory in 1873 resulted in a British expedition under Sir Garnet Wolseley defeating the Asante in 1874. This was a major blow to the Asante, and outlying parts of the empire took the opportunity of breaking loose. Asante power was not broken, however, and Britain did not assume any authority over the Asante. This position may be contrasted with the situation in the same decade in the Senegal region in which France was involved. The French defeated African polities in order to bring them under French control. But the British did not bring the Asante under their control in 1874. In fact, later in the year when they decided to proclaim the Gold Coast Colony, the new colony did not extend very far inland, and the Asante were not included in its borders. The main reason why Britain formally took over the coastal area was that it had become so involved in Fante affairs, that for some time it had been impossible to conduct trade in the region without also assuming responsibility for Fante affairs. British activity in this region thus illustrates British reluctance to assume formal control; at the same time creeping British intervention in the affairs of the Fante, with Fante encouragement, had led to a situation in which simple withdrawal was hardly an option, given the expanding trade of the region.

Porto Novo The British assumption of control in Lagos between 1851 and 1861, together with naval action against Porto Novo in the latter year, galvanised the French into action for they had substantial trading interests in Whydah and Porto Novo and feared that the British had designs on them. With encouragement from Porto Novo itself, the French declared a protectorate over it in 1863 to put a stop to any possible British advance further west along the coast. But neither European power planned any further extension of their territory, and once France was reassured that Britain had no expansionist designs, it allowed its protectorate over Porto Novo to lapse. When Anglo-French rivalry again became acute in the 1880s, Britain resumed its claim over Porto Novo.

Yorubaland It did not take the British and French long to find out that the trade of Lagos and Porto Novo depended ultimately on trade with the hinterland. By the 1860s Yorubaland was producing as much palm oil as was being sold in the Niger delta. Yorubaland remained politically unstable and fragmented but this did not really inhibit the growth of the

palm oil trade. One reason was that, while the slave trade depended on large political organisation, the collection of palm oil and its sale did not. But the palm oil trade did lead to greater competition for control of the trade routes to Lagos. The fighting that accompanied this competition disrupted trade so that as time went on officials and traders at Lagos began to think that British control should be extended over the hinterland behind Lagos, and that only by doing this could trade flourish. But for many years such appeals fell on deaf ears.

**The
Niger
delta**

British interest was particularly strong in the Niger delta, the so-called Oil Rivers, which obtained its name from its dominance in the palm oil trade. Initially European traders, missionaries and explorers went about their daily business without very much reference to national identity. Unlike the French government, which felt that it had a responsibility to take official action to help its traders, the official British government attitude was that British traders had to fend for themselves, and if they could not maintain themselves against local inhabitants or other European rivals, they should leave. But at the same time encouragement of legitimate trade as a way of combatting the slave trade, meant the promotion of British trading interests. Measures against the slave trade and the protection of British trading interests became synonymous in the Niger delta. In practice there was not much difference between the effects of British and French interference in West African affairs. As Professor Fage writes: 'In each case there were two policy objectives; to stop the slave trade, and to establish profitable legitimate trade in its place. If the French officials tended to put rather more emphasis on advancing the interests of French traders, which had as a consequence a reduction in the old slave trade, while the British laid more stress on fighting the slave trade, which had the consequence that British trading interests were advanced, the results from the African point of view were hardly distinguishable.'¹³

**The first
British
consul**

The appointment in 1849 of John Beecroft as British consul for the Bights of Benin and Bonny (Biafra), stationed on Fernando Po, ushered in a new era in which an official British representative was specifically commissioned to protect British interests against the interests of agents of other European countries and also against Africans. With the appointment of the consul, intervention in the affairs of the delta states became more frequent. A milestone in such interference was the introduction by the British traders, with the help of their consul, of the so-called 'Courts of Equity'. Europeans came to live on the rivers, and hulks moored offshore became a feature of European presence. African traders depended on European capital and credit, which led to disputes which were solved in Afro-European 'Courts of Equity', composed of African and European merchants. Slowly the operation of the courts began to shift in favour of Europeans.

**Unrest
and
war in
the
delta**

Unrest and war were widespread in all delta states from 1850s. Some of this pre-dated the fall in oil prices, and was due to tensions arising from the increasingly close competition for markets as new wholesalers came to the fore. The drop in prices exacerbated the situation as did the determination of British traders to penetrate into the interior and reduce prices by cutting out the middlemen. The consuls served as mediators in the making of peace treaties between the various delta states, and consular mediated treaties were signed between New Calabar and Bonny in 1871 and 1879, and

in 1871 between New Calabar and Okrika and Brass (Nembe); the consul had a share too in the peace treaty between Opobo and Bonny in 1873. More direct British intervention was not lacking nor was it confined to the period of the so-called scramble for Africa. In 1847, for example, a Bonny religious official was taken captive after he had incited the local inhabitants to oppose British traders in the area. In 1854 the British used the disturbances caused by local feuds as the excuse for sending King William Pepple of Bonny into exile.

**Pene-
tration
of the
interior**

The British consuls used the inter-state struggles in the Niger delta to open the way for British traders and missionaries into the hinterland. Even after explorers such as the Lander brothers had in 1830 shown that the Niger was navigable, the fevers that took so high a toll of Europeans venturing into the interior prevented traders from proceeding inland, even had there been an inducement to do so. Until the fall in prices there was not all that much incentive to do so. The trade pattern developed by Africans, and used by Europeans for so many years, was quite adequate. But low prices and the advent of the steamship sharpened competition, and suddenly there was very much of an incentive to proceed inland and cut out the middlemen, in this way reducing costs. At the same time in 1854 Baikie demonstrated the efficacy of quinine as a preventive measure, which made a permanent European presence in the interior possible. Between 1857 and 1860, with the help of British ships in the area, Macgregor Laird opened trading stations on the Niger at Aboh, Onitsha and Lokoja, thus cutting out the middlemen of the coast and making direct contact with the producers. This signalled the beginning of a bitter struggle by the middlemen to retain their position in the trading system. Laird's ships were attacked, and in response to Laird's appeal for help, ships of the anti-slavery patrol bombarded the villages of hostile middlemen. In 1870 the British government moved its consular headquarters to Calabar, and it was the consuls who called upon the fleet for aid, and interfered in the affairs of the city states. The formation of Goldie's company in 1879, and its attempts to establish a trading monopoly on the river, caused renewed resistance from African as well as French traders. As prices fell still further, efforts to penetrate the interior and bypass the middlemen were redoubled. In the increasingly competitive atmosphere African traders were at a disadvantage. They could not do as Goldie had done and combine to obtain funds from Europe to finance large-scale activities, and as the depression worsened in the 1880s African traders began to be pushed out of the market. Despite this increasing intervention it should be stressed that the British government did not want to establish formal control.

**Came-
roon**

The forested area of the Atlantic coast had not been visited very much by slave traders in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Because of this Cameroon was one of the few parts of Africa with good supplies of quality ivory near the coast. British traders had begun a pattern of interference in local politics here from 1792 onwards. With the passage of time the freedom of action of Cameroon leaders became more restricted; British interest in the abolition of the slave trade led to the signing of treaties between 1840 and 1844, in which the British obtained the right to intervene in local politics. Gunboat diplomacy was used to ensure that the terms of the treaties were upheld.

Credit In Cameroonian trade the system of credit was widespread. European traders supplied the credit. After offloading and valuing, their goods were swept away into the interior and often traders had to wait a long time before they were paid. The risks of this 'trust' system were very high and sometimes no payment arrived. So the oil traders welcomed the appointment of British consuls and the setting up of courts of equity, because these helped to reduce the slave trade which competed with their 'legitimate' trade, and helped them to recover bad debts. A Court of Equity was established at Douala in 1856. Sometimes chiefs asked for intervention, but the most common reason for interference was disputes between European traders and locals about repayment of credit.

French interests in Africa were also growing. By 1843 French firms had trading posts on the Ivory Coast, and French traders were also active at Whydah, Porto Novo and Cotonou on the coast of Dahomey. In 1863, as a result of British action in Lagos, the French declared a protectorate over Porto Novo. By the beginning of the nineteenth century there were about 70 French firms trading on the Gabon coast and there were also a number of French missionaries inland. In 1849 Libreville on the Gabon estuary was established as a home for freed slaves. The Gabon interior was even more heavily forested and thinly populated than that of Cameroon. Here too the growing demand for ivory increased trade, and the general rise in the level of trade saw an escalation in the slave trade. Despite official French contacts and the establishment of Libreville in 1848, until 1875 trade was dominated by British interests – French industrial manufacturers could not compete with cheap cottons and metalware coming in from England and America. The decline in the slave trade was very slow, and the trade shifted away from the well-patrolled Gabon estuary to the many creeks further south. The real end of the slave trade set in only in the 1860s.

A major change came about in Gabon in the 1860s and 1870s when Europeans began exploring the interior to obtain direct access to the commercial hinterland, where the rubber of the Ogowe basin was attracting interest. Slaves were now not much in demand for export, and were used to collect rubber. Groundnut and palm oil trading was also growing. The French were only minor participants in this new commercial growth, and by the early 1870s they were contemplating a total withdrawal. Before the 1880s the French had not regarded any of these places as possible bases from which to build up an empire.

Senegal The situation with regard to Senegal was, however, different. Since the seventeenth century the French had had Gorée, an island off the Cape Verde peninsula, and St Louis, on the Senegal River. In the first half of the nineteenth century these settlements were struggling and their only trade was in gum arabic. As a result of Napoleon III's decision to pursue an active colonial policy, Captain Louis Leon Faidherbe was appointed governor of Senegal in 1854. It did not take him long to reach the conclusion that if trade was to be promoted the people of the interior would have to be subjected and French traders protected. He set out to do this. Here we see a major difference between the British and French attitudes. The British believed that informal influence would secure the interests of their traders, and when, for example, the Asante were defeated in 1874, they were not rendered powerless nor were they brought into the Gold Coast Colony.

The French had a different attitude. When they conquered peoples in the interior with the aim of opening up trade, they incorporated them into the French empire.

Faidherbe's vision of empire

Faidherbe drew up a blueprint for the establishment of a large French empire in West Africa which would include obtaining the Gambia from Britain in return for French rights in Gabon. This would remove Britain from Senegambia as a rival, and the whole of the region would fall to France. At the same time it would allow Britain to link up the intervening territories between the Gold Coast and Lagos. The empire Faidherbe dreamed about would be not merely a trading empire, it would be a political empire, brought about by conquest and the subjugation of indigenous polities. He was fortunate in that the groundnut trade in Senegal had taken off and provided him with the money to pay for a force of African soldiers, trained and led by Europeans. The first step in the creation of this empire was to secure the course of the Senegal River and the country to the south by building stations as points from which French influence could radiate; by intervening in local conflicts they could increase their hold on the people. He envisaged the building of a chain of forts to Bamako on the Niger, which could then be used as a base for gunboats operating as far as the Bussa rapids. France would then be able to draw the trade of the Niger basin to Senegal after a railway had been constructed. Faidherbe advanced French power in the lower Senegal River valley. By the time that he left Senegal in 1865, the French hold on Futa Toro and Cayor (one of the largest of the Wolof states, which occupied much of the area between Dakar and St Louis) was largely secured.

Although French empire builders would return to Faidherbe's blueprint in later years, nothing came of his plans at the time. Negotiations with Britain concerning the relinquishment of the Gambia continued intermittently until 1875, but were inconclusive. Revolts in the south of Algeria dampened enthusiasm for a possible link-up between French interests in the western Sudan and Algeria. It was also realised that further progress could be made only at the expense of the Tukolor empire, and there was little enthusiasm for what would clearly be a major campaign. Besides this, other considerations pushed Africa to the back of the French official mind. From 1864 its attention was focused on Mexico and Indo-China, and then came the Franco-Prussian war of 1870–1871, followed by reconstruction.

Brière de l'Isle

When Louis-Alexandre Brière de l'Isle became governor of Senegal in 1876, there was a serious economic depression and the price of groundnuts was low; in addition the French government had cut its subsidy to the colony. Brière thus had strict instructions not to embark on any expensive undertakings. To raise the money for the completion of public works already in progress, the government agreed to Brière's plan for a system of differential tariffs on the importation of foreign cloths and for extra duties to be paid by foreign ships, thus taking a major step along the road towards tariff barriers.

Expansion

The way in which Brière ignored instructions not to embark on costly ventures illustrates an important aspect of French involvement in the Senegal region, and this is the manner in which local officials, and army officers in particular, managed to do what they wanted, which was to expand the French empire in Africa, despite official disap-

proval from the government. Brière shared Faidherbe's vision of a large French empire in the western Sudan. Like Faidherbe he was a military man and would use the military to extend French control. He was well aware of the difficulty of controlling military operations from Paris, particularly when the authorities in France were dependent upon the man on the spot for an assessment of the situation on the frontiers of expansion. In short, Brière knew that it would be extremely difficult for Paris to control him. From the days of the French occupation of Algeria army officers had been extending French power and influence with scant reference to Paris. They had become experts at using fast-moving and small columns to make lightning raids.

In 1877 Brière acted without government authorisation and re-established French control in the Futa Toro region. By carefully selecting the reports that were sent to France he was able to push the government in the direction he wanted. Thus in 1878 the government agreed to his undertaking a campaign in support of friendly tribes at war with the Tukolor, when Brière maintained that this was necessary in order to defend Senegal's eastern frontiers and to forestall a Tukolor invasion. But what Brière really wanted was to prepare the way for a French drive to the upper Niger and the destruction of the Tukolor empire. Brière did not have the backing of the French government for any decisive moves, but he did have the support of an influential group of expansionists in France, who believed that the prestige lost at Sedan and Metz could be restored by military success and glory in Africa. In 1879 Admiral Jean Jauréguibery, a former governor of Senegal, was Minister of Marine and Colonies. He was an enthusiastic expansionist and in 1880 he gave a specially created military command to Gustav Borgnis-Desbordes, who lost no time in driving towards the upper Niger.

**No
French
designs
on West
Africa**

Apart from French moves from Senegal, which were directed by army officers in Africa rather than the central government in Paris, there was no desire on the part of the French government to build an empire in West Africa any more than there was a desire to do so on the part of the British. But whether it wanted to or not, the French government found itself becoming more and more involved in affairs on the coast, and clearly once an interest had been established in an area it was difficult to stop further involvement. In this sense there was a certain inevitability about European expansion. But by 1880 European interests were confined very much to the coast. By 1880 it was only along the Senegal and lower Niger and one or two other places that Europeans were beginning to penetrate into the interior. The British colonies of Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast did not extend very far inland and there was no inclination to take over the hinterland of Lagos or to expand along the Gambia. The French government likewise had no deep-laid plans for using the isolated and scattered posts as starting points for the creation of a French empire.

**After
1880**

Much of this was to change after 1880. Indeed, by 1880 the change had already started. The depression that had begun about 1874 and was to continue until 1896 with a few brief spells of prosperity was a powerful motivating force for European penetration of the interior. This penetration was a major catalyst in destabilising relations between the Europeans and the indigenous polities, and in the unstable conditions the pressures on European governments to intervene gathered momentum as traders and missionaries

looked to governments to create a favourable climate for their activities. The pressure on the governments to act came not only from Africa and African conditions, but also from a new climate in Europe, where economic, political and strategic considerations became inextricably intertwined with escalating international rivalry and tension.

AN AFRICAN ELITE

Afro-European

We have referred to African traders and a mixed Afro-European presence around the European trading posts. The European presence was not very large by 1800. But there were many so-called Afro-Europeans, the mixed caste offspring of European fathers and African mothers, and of course many Africans who had been associated with the European posts for a considerable length of time. Thus in 1810 St Louis had a European population of 10, an Afro-European population of 500 and another 500 Africans who had connections with the post, and were to a greater or lesser degree Europeanised. As early as 1800 these mulattoes were more closely connected with the European traders than with the nearby African states. They had been educated at the trading posts or on trading vessels; some had even been educated in Europe, and they held positions associated with the administrative, commercial or military functions of the trading posts. The size of these coastal communities was increased by the advent of the steamship as more traders settled there. These Afro-Europeans played a vital part in the life of the coast, but from the late 1880s onwards they began to be replaced and were pushed aside by Europeans as their numbers increased.

Sierra Leone

The growth of an educated African elite was stimulated by the British colony of Sierra Leone. The colony was started before the abolition of the slave trade with 2 089 former slaves and fugitives from England, Nova Scotia and Jamaica who went there voluntarily. They had a difficult time, with unfriendly black neighbours and poor climate, and by 1802 only 1400 of the original pioneers remained. After the institution of naval patrols many slaves were set free in Sierra Leone. By 1850 Freetown had 16 950 inhabitants and in the interior of the country there were close to 40 000 people. With the schools and newspapers which began to appear in the 1840s and 1850s Freetown soon became a centre for the spread of European ideas and culture.

Creoles

Many of the slaves freed by British ships and set down in Sierra Leone were Yoruba. The collapse of the Old Oyo kingdom in southern Yorubaland had been accompanied by much disruption and internal fighting which made this an ideal place in which to obtain slaves. In Sierra Leone slaves were isolated from their cultural roots and many of them adopted the language, way of life, morals and religion of the English administrators and missionaries. A new African, the Creole, emerged, at home in both European and African worlds. Creoles were often mulattoes. Taking advantage of the education and religion available in Sierra Leone, many of these Creoles wanted a share in the development and exploitation of Africa. In Sierra Leone itself, which was small, there was not much scope for exercising their talents. Moreover, there was some resistance to them in Sierra Leone and the original settlers and their descendants regarded themselves as a superior caste. Large numbers of Creoles thus left Sierra Leone for other parts of West Africa. Many of the Yoruba wished to return to their original homelands. These

Yoruba re-immigrants were known as saro, and they settled especially in the new city of Abeokuta in Yorubaland, which had been established as a place of refuge from the wars. Everywhere the Creoles went they promoted British ideas and protection. They sought British rule as a means of modernising society and they saw an important role for themselves in the process, once the traditional rulers had been subjected.

**Saro
and
amaro**

Besides the saro from Sierra Leone, other re-immigrants began to drift back to Yorubaland from Brazil and Cuba. They were known as amaro. These 'Brazilians' were very strong in places such as Lagos, and in Dahomey in the 1890s half the merchants were 'Brazilians'. The amaro, however, were not such a strong merchant body as the saro. There was no formal arrangement about where saro and amaro could work and both were found throughout the area. But the saro tended to operate in areas that were coming under the control of Britain, while the Catholic-oriented amaro felt more comfortable in Porto Novo and Whydah and so made their mark in Dahomey. When the French eventually occupied this region, there was a residue of Latin culture which made this a fairly congenial area for them.

**Chris-
tian
missions**

In the growth of an African elite, Christian missions became a significant element in the process of change in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1800 in the whole of West Africa there were only three missionary societies; by 1840 there were some 15 societies operating in West Africa. Mission societies were particularly strongly represented on the Gold Coast. The Church Missionary Society, the Methodists and the Baptists were active in Nigeria in the 1840s and 1850s. The leaders in the Niger delta welcomed the introduction of missionaries into their midst. They hoped that education and knowledge of English would help them in their trading and also improve relations generally with the British government and that they would obtain the support of that government in their internal power struggles and in their rivalry with neighbouring states.

**Spread
of West-
ern
educa-
tion**

One of the most conspicuous successes of the missionaries was in the spreading of Western education. In 1827 the Church Missionary Society established Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone to train African clergy. In 1876 it became affiliated to the University of Durham, so that students could receive a degree from a British university. The Fourah Bay College formed the nucleus of an Anglo-African society that was able to assimilate the stream of recaptives which reached a peak in the 1840s. By 1841 the Church Missionary Society had 21 primary schools in the British colony, and in 1842 it founded two secondary schools. By 1846 the Wesleyans had 24 primary schools in the Gold Coast, and the Wesleyan High School was opened there in 1876. Both the Church Missionary Society and the Wesleyans had schools in Lagos.

**Chris-
tianity**

Much attention has been given to the Islamic revolution, but this Christian religious revolution also had a major impact on African societies. Besides acquiring technical skills, converted Africans were introduced to Christian and European culture in innumerable ways. Architecture became modified under the influence of Christianity, Western ideas on healing and medicine took root, the wearing of Western-style clothes became common. The traditional basis of African society and family life was weakened

by the rejection by the converts of polygamy, belief in ancestor worship and witchcraft. Largely as a result of the activities of the schools, from the 1850s there began to emerge an educated class of Africans. Instructed mainly through the medium of English or French, members of this educated elite made their appearance in various coastal towns. It was not long before they were also to be found further inland. By 1880 there was a fairly large group of these educated elite in West Africa.

**Edu-
cated
elite**

Although more prominent than most of the elite, James Africanus Horton may be taken as an example of this new class of West African. He was born in Sierra Leone in 1835, and trained as a doctor in Britain from 1853 to 1859. He entered the West African Medical Service as a staff assistant surgeon. Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who was enslaved at the age of 15, and then liberated, attended the Fourah Bay College and he became a bishop of the Anglican Church, the first African to do so. Broughton Davies qualified as a doctor in 1859, while Samuel Lewis became a lawyer and was the first African to receive a knighthood. Edward Wilmot Blyden (who was born in the West Indies, but spent most of his life in Liberia) was another early African intellectual and his writings had an impact on the formulation of the Pan-African ideal. Abbé Boilat was an educated African from the French community.

**Occu-
pations**

Some members of this educated elite entered the teaching profession, while others became ministers and preachers. Thus by 1885 in the Gold Coast the Wesleyans had 15 African ministers, 259 preachers and 79 teachers. But most of the educated elite became independent traders, operating on credit extended by resident traders and foreign companies. A number of them had small ships and traded along the coast. For most of the nineteenth century there was not much European capital involved in the African trade, so African traders with relatively small amounts could do well. They competed successfully with European traders. Some of them even traded with Europe on their own account after the introduction of regular steamship services in the 1850s. But the Creole traders could operate only within the European trading orbit, because they did not have access to such large amounts of credit as some of the European traders with banking connections in Europe. So when a trade depression hit the area in the late 1870s these African traders were at a distinct disadvantage.

**Racial
discrim-
ination**

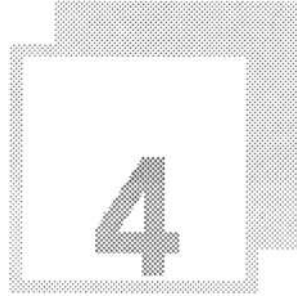
But in the meantime, in mid-century, they pushed the frontiers of the retail trade further inland in the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. But the hopes of this educated elite of doctors, ministers, teachers, traders and merchants, were soon to be dealt a harsh blow. Until the 1850s educated Africans who went into the professions were treated as equals by the whites and were not discriminated against in appointments in the church, educational institutions or civil administrations. The majority of the elite believed in a future in which Africa would be uplifted by European technology, learning and religion and they saw themselves as playing an important role in this modernising process. But after the 1850s in Europe and America pseudo-scientific theories about race emerged in which Africans were assigned a very inferior place. In both the church and the administration Africans began to be discriminated against in favour of whites.

- Ethiopianism** It was largely as a result of the racial discrimination practised by white missionaries that an African religious and political nationalist movement emerged which became known as Ethiopianism. The term is coined from the biblical verse 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God'. Its aim was to establish churches under the control of Africans themselves that would be in tune with African cultures and traditions. The Ethiopian movement began in South Africa, probably in the 1860s. The first African independent church in West Africa was established in Nigeria in 1888 by the Southern Baptist Union, an American missionary society. Its members were urged to retain African names, dress and customs, and to use their own language in worship.
- Pan-Africanism** The educated elite in West Africa had a vigorous political agenda and in articles, books and speeches they took pains to refute charges about black racial inferiority. In the course of their campaign an African racial consciousness was born as well as the concepts of Pan-Africanism and that of the African Personality. Two pioneers in this area were James Africanus Horton (1835–1883) and Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832–1912). Among the works of Horton that dealt with the above issues were *Political economy of British Western Africa* (1865), *West African countries and peoples* (1868) and *Letters on the political condition of the Gold Coast* (1870). He argued that the differences in the stages of civilisation between black and white had nothing at all to do with any supposed racial inferiority of the black man, but were due entirely to their 'external circumstances'. He was also one of the first advocates of Pan-Africanism, and pride in his black ancestry led him, while he was studying in England, to add the name 'Africanus' to his other names. In his later writing he often signed himself 'Africanus Horton'. His writing went beyond cultural and racial issues and he also made a plea for political independence.
- Horton**
- Blyden** Edward Wilmot Blyden was even more prolific and radical than Horton. Although born in the West Indies he spent most of his life in Liberia, working as a lecturer and diplomat. His books include *African colonization* (1862), *Vindication of the Negro Race* (1857), *A voice from bleeding Africa on behalf of her exiled children* (1856), *Hope for Africa* (1861) and *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* (1887). He condemned and refuted the racist theories of his time, and was an advocate of Pan-Africanism and of the idea of 'Africa for the Africans'. He believed that Islam and polygamy were more in tune with the African personality than Christianity. He was a firm advocate of racial purity and condemned mixed marriages. He preached racial pride and the necessity of maintaining the integrity of the black race. In a lecture delivered in Freetown in 1893 he used the term 'African personality'.
- James Johnson** The fiery Yoruba-Creole evangelist James Johnson (c. 1836–1917) was born in Sierra Leone and educated at the Freetown Grammar School and Fourah Bay College. After teaching at the college from 1860 to 1863 he joined the Church Missionary Society. In 1876 he was put in charge of their stations in the Yorubaland interior. The way in which he promoted Nigerian nationalism, eulogised the achievements of black men and preached about the struggle for power in the church and civil administration, made many of his fellow white churchmen uneasy. Africa should be evangelised by Africans, he insisted, and the church should be staffed at all levels by Africans as Europeans could

not identify themselves with African ambitions. In 1880 the Church Missionary Society decided that he was too radical and removed him from his post.

Notes

- 1 A. A. Boahen, 'New trends and processes in Africa in the nineteenth century', in J. F. A. Ajayi (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. 6, *Africa in the nineteenth century until the 1880s*, p. 63.
- 2 See pp. 53–54.
- 3 J. F. A. Ajayi, 'Africa at the beginning of the nineteenth century: Issues and prospects', in *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. 6, pp. 8–9.
- 4 P. E. Lovejoy, 'Interregional monetary flows in the precolonial trade of Nigeria', *Journal of African History*, 15(4), 1974, pp. 563–585.
- 5 E. J. Alagoa, L. Z. Elango & M. Metegue n'nah, 'The Niger delta and the Cameroon region', in *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. 6, p. 748.
- 6 J. F. A. Ajayi, 'Conclusion: Africa on the eve of the European conquest', in *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. 6, p. 774.
- 7 Boahen, 'New trends', p. 61.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 A. G. Hopkins, *An economic history of West Africa*, p. 124.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 131.
- 11 R. A. Austen, *African economic history: Internal development and external dependency*, p. 102.
- 12 R. V. Kubicek, 'The colonial steamer and the occupation of West Africa by the Victorian state, 1840–1900', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 18(1), 1990, pp. 9–32. The quote is on p. 27. For an account of the significance of the steamship on trade in West Africa see M. Lynn, 'From sail to steam: The impact of the steamship services on the British palm oil trade with West Africa, 1850–1890', *Journal of African History*, 30, 1989, pp. 227–245.
- 13 J. D. Fage, *A history of Africa*, p. 332.

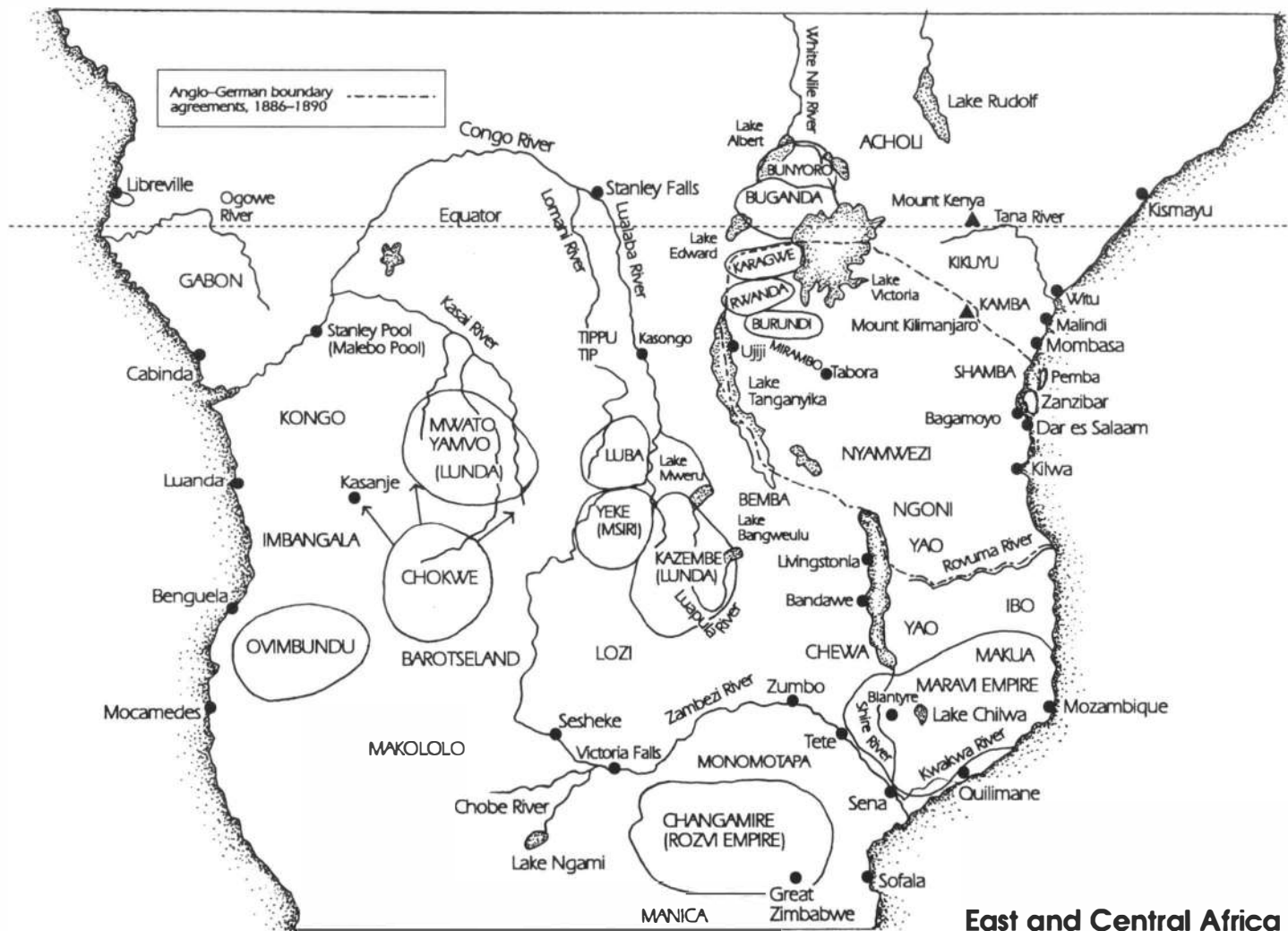


Ivory and slaves in East and Central Africa (c. 1800–1880)

**Com-
pari-
sons
with
other
parts of
Africa**

Under Central and East Africa we include most of the land north of the Limpopo and south of the Equator. The coast of what is often called West Central Africa featured in the chapters on the Atlantic slave trade and West Africa, but the peoples and routes that supplied the slaves for the coast will be discussed here. There are some similarities between the situation in North and West Africa and that existing in East and Central Africa. In Northeast Africa and in the central Sudan of West Africa we come across warlords such as Zubayr and Rabih. In Central and East Africa we meet up with leaders such as Msiri, Mirambo, Tippu Tip and Mlozi who also built up secondary trading and conquest states that dealt in slaves and ivory. In these other regions we witness some empire building during the period of the jihads by people such as al-Hajj Umar and Samory Touré, by Mohammad Ali in Egypt and Menelik in Ethiopia. In this region too, we have some empire building and state expansion, for example on the island of Madagascar by the Merina, in the area of the Great Lakes by Buganda, and also the growth of the trading empire of the Omani Arabs in East Africa. But large empires were scarce because the geography did not encourage the growth of big polities. It was mainly in the Great Lakes region that we find sizeable states such as Buganda.

- Missions and explorers** The growing European presence in East and Central Africa was also linked with the banning of the slave trade and the encouragement of legitimate commerce. Mission stations played a major role in this. But it was a different role from that played by mission stations in West Africa, which were by and large instrumental in westernising and nurturing black elites. In East Central Africa mission stations were very much in the frontline, witnessing the devastation of slave raids, sometimes even taking up arms to drive off slave raiders. Explorers also played a different role here, for it was a region where European interest, and knowledge of conditions, came much later than in West Africa. Explorers were very much in the forefront in bringing conditions in East Africa to the notice of Europe.
- Penetration of interior** In East and Central Africa the penetration of the interior came earlier and was accompanied by much more violence than in West Africa. The increased demand for slaves and ivory led to the coastal people taking the initiative in going into the interior. In West Africa the fall in palm oil prices, followed by the depression in the 1870s, forced Europeans to change their modus operandi and to go inland in order to cut prices. In contrast with West Africa, it was not Europeans who ventured into the interior from their coastal depots, but Swahili-Arabs backed by Indian capital.
- Swahili-Arabs**
- Ngoni invasions** Besides the Swahili-Arab penetration, East Africa was also faced with massive inroads from outside the region in the form of the Ngoni invasions. The East and Central African interior was thus faced with two invasions – the invasion by traders from the coast, and invasion by the Ngoni from the south.
- Density of population** For the most part Central and East Africa was less densely populated than West Africa. Very little of the bush and forest had been cleared, which gave the tsetse fly ample breeding opportunity, so that large areas were unsuitable for draught animals. Besides the density of population, there was also a different distribution of population. There was a high density of population on the East African coast and also in the interior in the vicinity of the Great Lakes. But between the coast and the lakes the country was sparsely populated. Behind the fertile coastal belt was a large stretch of uninviting scrub land. One of the few places where a densely populated area linked the coast with the interior was in the Zambezi valley, and the Portuguese made use of this to involve themselves in the affairs of the interior long before 1800. Whereas in West Africa in the first half of the nineteenth century the slave trade in most places was declining and was being replaced by legitimate trade in vegetable products (palm oil in particular), in East and Central Africa the slave trade, which had not featured very prominently in the period before 1800, expanded rapidly in the first half of the century, and by 1880 was probably at its height. And although men like David Livingstone spoke of promoting the three Cs – Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation – there was very little that could be done to promote legitimate commerce to replace the trade in slaves. The one product that was available was ivory, but the expansion of trade in ivory went hand in hand with the growth of the slave trade. Of crucial significance is that East and Central Africa had no equivalent of palm oil. With one or two exceptions it did not have the rivers to transport goods, so that human portage and the slave trade sustained each other.
- Slave trade**



East and Central Africa

Under-development In West Africa we saw how the demand for slaves and palm oil had not led to the development of an economic infrastructure that might have provided the basis for the growth of processing industries. In East Central Africa the position was even worse. As we have seen, in West Africa the arrival of Europeans on the Atlantic seaboard was only one factor in the economic equation; there were a number of indigenous strands of economic development and growth, and until well into the second half of the nineteenth century it could be argued that internal dynamism was more important than external stimuli. Whereas in West Africa there was a vigorous local long-distance and even overseas trade that was independent of the slave trade, in this region the slave and ivory trade played a more crucial role in opening up routes and creating new demands and avenues. In the period up to 1880 the search for slaves and ivory, essentially extractive products, became so significant that other activities such as agriculture and manufacturing were neglected. So in East Central Africa the underdevelopment of society was much more marked than in West Africa. The stimulus for economic change, and the accompanying political and social restructuring, were very much dependent upon the Atlantic and Indian Ocean trading systems.

THE SLAVE TRADE SOUTH OF CAPE DELGADO

Portuguese presence The Portuguese conducted the slave and ivory trade south of Cape Delgado. They had interests on both the west and east coasts of Africa. On the west coast south of the Congo River the Portuguese had withdrawn from the Kongo kingdom in 1665 and by 1800 their hold on the coast was based at Luanda and Benguela in Angola. On the east coast by 1800 they were confined to Mozambique Island and the opposite mainland and a few other bases such as Quilimane on the coast and Sena and Tete on the Zambezi River. Although from time to time the Portuguese laid claim to a huge, undefined part of the hinterland, their presence was limited mainly to the coast. In the interior Portuguese presence was represented by the *prazeros* of the Zambezi valley. By the nineteenth century the descendants of the original Portuguese *prazeros* had largely been Africanised.

Corruption The Portuguese settlements of Angola and Mozambique had a notorious reputation for inefficient and corrupt administration. Governors sent out from Portugal frequently found themselves at loggerheads with the local white population when they wished to take steps against the slave trade, which officially was supposed to have ended in Portuguese possessions in 1838. In 1839 the governor of Angola was unceremoniously ejected when he tried to give effect to the home government's ban on the slave trade. Life for governors was far more pleasant if they did not oppose the slave trade, but instead supplemented their meagre salaries by taking part. One of the reasons why the settlements languished was that it was difficult to persuade people from Portugal to settle there. Those who emigrated to escape the grinding poverty of their homeland preferred Brazil to Africa. The land was better in Brazil and gold had been discovered there in the 1690s. As late as the middle of the nineteenth century there were fewer than 2 000 whites in Angola and an even smaller number in Mozambique. The overwhelming majority of these whites were men, so miscegenation was steadily producing

a growing mulatto population, who took the lead in pioneering trade links between the coast and the interior.

In-creased demand for slaves In the eighteenth century Indian and Portuguese traders funnelled ivory through Mozambique, but this trade shifted northwards early in the nineteenth century to Kilwa which was outside Portuguese control, and Mozambique had to rely more on the slave trade. Fortunately for the Mozambican economy, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the demand for slaves was rising. There were a number of reasons for this. One was that British anti-slavery measures were not as vigorous off the East African coast as they were in the Atlantic, and as the campaign against the trade gathered momentum on the west coast, more slaves were taken from the east coast. The 1817 treaty with the British allowed Portuguese slave traders to continue operating from south of the equator, so that many of the slaves destined for Brazil came from Angola and Mozambique. In Mozambique the slaves were exported mainly from Mozambique Island or from Quilimane, located on the Kwakwa River, which was preferred to the mouths of the Zambezi River as the main entry point to the Zambezi valley. The prohibition on slave trading in Portuguese possessions after 1838 doubtlessly led to a decline in the Mozambican trade, but the Brazilian market continued to be supplied from Portuguese possessions until the Brazilian trade came to an end in 1851.

Failure of anti-slaving patrols For a long time British anti-slavery patrols in East African waters were very small. It was only from the 1840s that the growth of Zanzibar as a trading centre of note brought European commercial interests to the region, and revelations of the East African slave trade focused the attention of British humanitarians on the region. For a short spell in the 1840s British ships off Mozambique had the cooperation of the Portuguese governor in apprehending slavers, but this was the exception rather than the rule as most governors made a living from the trade, despite the official Portuguese ban. British officials often had to close their eyes to the situation. In his efforts to see that local Portuguese officials obeyed Lisbon's ban on the trade, the first British consul appointed in Mozambique in 1857 made himself so unpopular that life became impossible and he was forced to leave after nine months. The British did not appoint another consul there until 1875.

Trade with Réunion and Mauritius In addition to the Brazil trade, Mozambique was supplying slaves for the French East African islands. After 1785 the development of French plantations on the Mascarene Islands, including Réunion and Mauritius, where sugar had become the basis of the economy by the end of the century, increased the demand for slaves. From the late 1730s the French had bought slaves for the Mascarene Islands in Madagascar, but these slaves soon acquired a reputation for being 'insolent' and so the French gradually obtained more slaves from Mozambique, developing a flourishing trade with the Makua who lived close to the coast behind Mozambique. But as was the case with much of Mozambique's other trade which began to gravitate to Kilwa, the French later obtained slaves from Kilwa. Slaves were taken from Kilwa by Arabs in dhows to the Comoro Islands, where the cargoes were transferred to French boats.

**French
suspi-
cions**

As in West Africa, the French complicated and hampered British attempts to take decisive action against the slave trade. It was not merely the slave trade that was at issue. France saw the British campaign as a device to further British trading and other interests at the expense of France. There can be little doubt that British actions were not always humanitarian and disinterested. Thus British involvement in Madagascar in the nineteenth century was aimed not only at preventing the slave trade but also at limiting French influence on the island. The demand for slaves in the Mascarenes and the importation of firearms in return for the slaves altered the balance of power among competing kingdoms in Madagascar. The Merina near the centre of the island profited very much from this demand for slaves, and built up their power. In their attempt to conquer the whole island early in the nineteenth century they welcomed the help of French agents and missionaries in modernising the state; a standing army was created which was modelled on European lines and the Merina soon dominated about two thirds of the island. When the British captured Mauritius in 1810, they decided that support for a Merinian conquest of the whole island would end the wars between the various groups – wars which fed the slave trade – and at the same time would increase British influence at the expense of the French. The French were suspicious of British actions taken in the name of striking a blow at the slave trade, especially when they saw that the result was an increase in British influence at the expense of their own. In 1817, in return for agreeing to renounce the external slave trade, although not slavery within Madagascar itself, King Radama obtained British assistance and increased his domains.

But the rise in British power in Madagascar was only temporary, and when King Radama died in 1828 there was a reaction against European influence which lasted until 1861. When European influence again expanded, the French predominated. The Merina were able to maintain their independence for a long time because of their skill in playing off the British and French missionaries and traders against one another.

French suspicions of British motives were also confirmed by their experience with the Réunion labour supply. During the Napoleonic wars French privateers from their bases in Mauritius played havoc with British shipping; the British answer to this was to capture the Mascarenes in 1810. When peace was concluded in 1815 the British retained Mauritius, which brought the slave trade there to an end. In order to obtain more labourers for the sugar plantations on the island, from the 1830s the British imported contract labourers from British India. Many of them remained behind after the expiration of their contracts. Fresh inputs of contract labour followed a period of great growth in the sugar industry in the 1850s, and by 1907 almost half a million Indians had been brought to Mauritius. At the same time the British refused to allow the French to import Indian labour to Réunion to extend the plantations there. So the French devised a free labour scheme, the so-called *libres engagés* system, obtaining the labour from Africa. The manner in which the labourers were recruited caused the *engagé* system to be labelled by the British a form of slavery and they made attempts to stop it. The French saw these British moves as commercially inspired, a diabolical plot to starve the French island of labour. In 1861 the British did eventually permit the recruitment of Indian labour to Réunion under strictly controlled supervision, but this was stopped again in

the early 1880s. The illegal slave trade to Réunion from Mozambique continued alongside the engag   system and did not come to an end until the early 1880s.

SEYYID SAID AND OMANI POWER IN EAST AFRICA

**Little
contact
be-
tween
coast
and in-
terior**

The decline of Portuguese enterprises in East Africa was partly the result of the rise of the Omani trading empire based on Zanzibar. North of Mozambique by 1800 there had been very little contact between the East African coast and the interior. In the well-watered and fertile coastal area with its white sandy beaches fringed with coconut palms, the Swahili-Arabs traded coconuts, copra, oil seeds and cowrie shells. They saw no reason for going into the arid belt of thorn scrub and poor soil that lay beyond the coast. Also, the people of the interior were hostile, and the presence of the tsetse fly meant that they could not take draught animals into much of the interior. Soon, however, there were very good reasons for venturing into this hitherto unattractive country behind the coast. The two most important reasons may be summed up as an increased demand for slaves and ivory. As on the Atlantic coast of West Africa, the pull of international trade drew coast and interior together.

**Seyyid
Said**

In 1806 Seyyid Said became sultan of Muscat in Oman on the southwestern tip of Saudi Arabia. As sultan he was the hereditary overlord of the Arab settlements along the East African coast, but his control was only nominal. The new sultan determined to build up a trading empire in East Africa. Before the end of the first year of his reign he had signed a trade and friendship treaty with Great Britain, thus ensuring himself of British support against interference from other European powers. At this stage the British presence on the East African coast was very small, smaller than the presence of other European powers, but the treaty nevertheless served Said's purpose.

**Mom-
basa
sub-
dued**

Mombasa, Kilwa and Zanzibar were the most important city states on the coast, and the powerful Mazrui family of Mombasa in particular was unwilling to recognise his overlordship. In 1824 Captain William Fitzwilliam Owen accepted the offer of the rebellious inhabitants of Mombasa and proclaimed Mombasa a British possession. The British government, however, refused to accept Mombasa and the flag was hauled down. Palmerston was firmly opposed to any extension of British authority – he regarded treaties and patrol boats as the best way of combatting the slave trade. Britain was interested in fighting the slave trade and in the commercial possibilities presented by Zanzibar – she was not interested in colonies. With the help of his small force of mercenaries as well as naval action Said finally succeeded in subduing Mombasa in 1837. He then became the acknowledged ruler of the whole coast from Warsheik (just north of Mogadishu) to Cape Delgado in the south. The sultan left most of the local rulers in power and did not interfere with them so long as they acknowledged his sovereignty and paid him customs dues. Said farmed out the collection of these dues to Indian merchants and traders who settled in Zanzibar and the coastal towns in increasing numbers.

**Arab
slave
trading**

Before the late eighteenth century the slave trade from East Africa had been insignificant when compared with the numbers involved in the West African slave trade. But it

had been going on longer than the West African trade. It was conducted mainly by Arabs and the Swahili-Arabs, an increasingly large group of varying degrees of Arab-African mixing. The Koran appeared to sanction slavery by forbidding the enslavement of the Faithful. Slaves therefore had to be obtained among infidel and pagan populations. For centuries slaves had been carried northwards across the Sahara to North African ports in order to be shipped to the Ottoman empire and to the East. Slaves and ivory were also brought from the interior to the east coast, where the Arabs bought them and transported them to Arabia and Persia in dhows. The passage between Zanzibar and southern Arabia usually took between 30 and 35 days. The short passage from Kilwa to Zanzibar took only 24 hours, so no food for slaves was taken aboard. If the winds failed and the boat was becalmed for a few days, there was great hardship and many slaves died in appalling conditions in the cramped dhows.

**Zan-
zibar,
Pemba
and the
clove
industry**

Said was responsible for increasing the demand for slaves by starting to produce cloves on Zanzibar in 1818. Prior to that Zanzibar's only export had been coconuts. Pemba, another island close by, exported rice. But when an Omani Arab brought the first shoots of a clove tree to Zanzibar from Réunion, Said saw the possibilities and before long many plantations had been established there and also on the island of Pemba. As the demand for cloves expanded from the 1830s ever-increasing numbers of slaves were required for the plantations. By 1856 clove exports were worth about £60 000 a year. By the early twentieth century the two islands were producing almost 80 per cent of the world's cloves. Between the 1780s and 1820s slave prices fell by half, making the use of slave labour in the clove plantations more attractive. Clove prices were at their highest between 1835 and 1845, after which they declined, with the exception of the period after 1872, when a hurricane destroyed many of Zanzibar's clove trees, causing a shortage. Although the price of cloves dropped after 1845, expansion of production continued for some time, for it takes at least seven or eight years for clove trees to reach full production, so the greatest need for slaves to pick cloves came in the 1850s, when prices were falling.

**Zan-
zibar
and the
slave
trade**

Zanzibar was not only a producer of cloves, but it also became the centre of much of the East African coastal trade, with goods destined for Oman being funnelled through the island. It has been estimated that as many as 70 000 slaves a year were passing through the Zanzibar market in the 1860s and that the real growth in traffic had been after 1840, by which time the West African slave trade was drying up. It is likely that about 10 000 of the 70 000 were being absorbed by Zanzibar and Pemba for their plantations. The growing importance of Zanzibar as the entrepôt of East African trade because of the activities of Arab and Indian traders caused Said to move his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1840. Around 1860 there were about 4 000 Arabs in Zanzibar where they formed a landed upper class. At the same time there were about 6 000 Indians in East Africa. It was largely because of Said's initiative and Indian capital that the isolation between the East African littoral and the interior was ended.

Ivory

If one reason for vigorous trade between the coast and the interior was the greatly increased demand for slaves, the other reason was the increased demand for ivory. Ivory had been an item of trade for a long time. African ivory, which was not as brittle

as Indian ivory, had been exported to India for Hindu wedding ceremonies and other uses for at least a thousand years, but now Europe and America developed new uses for East African ivory. Knife handles had been made from the hard ivory of West Africa, but the softer East African ivory was better for billiard balls, piano keys and combs. It is ironic that this demand for luxury items should have dictated the course of African economies, but such was the strength of the new industrialising world that even its demand for trivial articles could transform non-industrialising countries dependent totally for trade on labour and natural resources. Throughout the nineteenth century demand was greater than the supply, and the price moved steadily upwards. The ivory and slave trade developed side by side, and slaves were used to transport the ivory to the coast as draught animals could not live in the tsetse-infested country. By the 1850s Zanzibar was exporting almost 250 000 kg of ivory a year, valued at £150 000; exports remained high until the 1890s. But it was not a trade that could last indefinitely, especially as firearms became more freely available in the interior from the 1860s. For every 50 kg of ivory at least one elephant had to be killed, and hunters like the Chokwe had continually to move further afield as elephants became scarce.

Kilwa The growth of Zanzibar was to a certain extent at the expense of Mozambique. Kilwa, to the north of Mozambique, was outside the Portuguese sphere of control and was a real thorn in the flesh of the Portuguese since it drew trade from the same interior. Yao overland routes to Kilwa passed through the densely populated regions around Lake Nyasa, thus providing a good supply of slaves. Trade in Kilwa was stimulated by the demand for slaves for the French islands. Yao traders who took their ivory to Mozambique could also deliver the tusks to Kilwa and from early in the nineteenth century they began doing so. They did so because the Makua, who stood between them and Mozambique, having obtained firearms through trading slaves with the French, prevented the Yao from going to the coast, making this route rather dangerous. Moreover, at a time when the price of ivory on world markets was rapidly rising, the Portuguese increased the duties on Yao trade and took steps to establish a government monopoly in the trade in ivory.

Growth of Zanzibar's commercial empire Through taxes and restrictive licensing the Portuguese crown ensured that a large share of the profits of the Mozambique trade went to Portuguese citizens and the state. Although this led to friction with the Indian traders of Mozambique, Indian traders continued to patronise Mozambique so long as a steady stream of gold was reaching the Portuguese coast from the interior. But by the late eighteenth century the amount of gold coming through had dropped markedly, and traders increasingly went to Kilwa for slaves and ivory. The transfer of the ivory to Kilwa contributed to the growth of Zanzibar's commercial empire in the nineteenth century, as Zanzibar became sufficiently powerful to make sure that all foreign trade went through Zanzibar itself, placing a ban on direct foreign trade in ivory and copal from Kilwa. Foreign traders were also barred from most of the coast of Tanzania. For all the trade south of Bagamoyo Zanzibar was the obvious stopping place for Indian Ocean sailing ships for, if they went further down the coast, they risked being stranded by the changing pattern of wind.

- India and the ivory trade** Zanzibar's wealth was above all built on ivory. The price of ivory quadrupled between 1823 and 1873. Indian merchants, many of them with commercial ties in India, financed the growing trade. They represented large trading houses and manufacturers in India and had both the goods and the capital to organise trade on the large scale that was necessary to secure the safe passage of caravans in the unsettled interior. They gave credit to Swahili-Arab traders to organise well-equipped and well-armed caravans to go into the interior in search of ivory and slaves. The Arabs concentrated mainly on the slave trade while the Indians tended to dominate the ivory trade, perhaps because they had the knowledge and contacts for the Bombay ivory market, which received most East African ivory. A proportion of the tusks reaching Bombay was re-exported to England. Said's encouragement of Indian enterprise and settlement gave them a prominent place in the East African economy. The capital and goods the Indians supplied were critical for the Arab and Swahili caravans. Although the Indians did not obtain any prominent political positions, economically they became very dominant.
- Duties on ivory** Because Zanzibar became an important entrepôt through which trade was channelled and through which ivory passed, it could successfully impose duties on ivory coming in. Nyamwezi traders were discouraged from selling their ivory in Zanzibar by discriminatory tariffs. Tusks brought in by Arabs paid less duty than tusks brought in by Nyamwezi. Because Zanzibar was so prominent in East African trade American and European traders also went there, since they could obtain all they required in Zanzibar, rather than waste time travelling up the coast.
- Moresby treaty** The steps taken by the British to end the Portuguese and French slave trading activities south of Cape Delgado were matched in the north by pressure on Seyyid Said. From 1806, early in his reign, when British ships cleared the waters around Oman of privateers, Said and the British had a good relationship, which was reflected in the signing of a treaty of friendship in 1806. In the 1820s pressure was applied to force Said to take action against the slave trade. In 1822 Captain Fairfax Moresby, senior officer in Mauritius, signed a treaty with Said in which the sultan agreed to ban the sale of slaves to Christians by his subjects. This treaty, together with the 1817 treaty with Radama of Madagascar, meant *in theory* that the export of slaves to European possessions would end. Said had signed the treaty because he had no option – he could not match British naval power. In addition, as far as the sultan was concerned the Moresby Treaty had a positive side – it tacitly recognised the sultan's authority over the coast, and would thus prevent other powers from challenging him. Although Said's subjects were unhappy with this limitation on their activities, in practice it did not restrict them, for they simply ignored it. If Said benefited from the treaty, so did the British. Although it did not live up to its expectations, it did give the British a measure of control over the slave trade on the coast.
- Expanding trade relations** From the early nineteenth century American and German traders appeared in Zanzibar and in 1837 an American consul was appointed there; a British consul followed four years later and in 1844 the French also appointed a consul in Zanzibar. Between 1859 and 1879 the total foreign trade of Zanzibar increased from £500 000 to £2 000 000. In the first half of the nineteenth century France, Germany and the United States all traded

much more than the British in Zanzibar. Trade with the United States in particular was growing rapidly.

**British
trade
rela-
tions**

Although the sultan was trading more with the French than the British, he relied on the British to keep the French at a distance. He was afraid that an increase in French influence would lead to the annexation of his territories, whereas the British had shown by the Moresby Treaty and the rejection of Owen's action in Mombasa that they had no design on Said's empire. Because of the anti-slavery patrols, there were also more British ships to be seen off the coast, so British power was more visible. These British ships were also useful on occasion to the sultan, whose political authority over much of the area where he was recognised as suzerain was somewhat shaky. His political power was confined to the islands and to the mainland ports which he could control with his own fleet, or, if necessary, with the aid of British ships. So although British trade with Zanzibar was not so large, British political influence was predominant.

**Said's
in-
fluence
in the
interior**

Although Said did not have power in the interior, he did have influence. The traders who went into the interior did so under his banner, and the inland rulers honoured and respected the flag. Seyyid Said made trade treaties with some of the inland rulers to secure the safety of his traders. His successor, Barghash, later did the same, exchanging gifts with these rulers. This was all very convenient for the traders, for they received the benefit of the sultan's influence, without having to restrict their actions by any code laid down in Zanzibar. They were free to act much as they liked without reference to the sultan. The political structure of the Zanzibar trading empire was thus extremely fragile. Even on the coast the sultan's hold depended very much on the extent to which Britain was prepared to assist him.

**Ham-
er-
ton
treaty**

The British supported the sultan but the price of assistance was increasing pressure on Said to take steps against the slave trade. Hamerton was the first British consul in Zanzibar and served there from 1841 until his death in 1857. His main duties were to obtain information on the extent of the slave trade in the area and also to keep an eye on the French. He established very good relations with Said, becoming a trusted adviser of the sultan. But he did not do very much to limit the slave trade. He did, however, keep an eye on the French. The threat to Said implied by the spread of French influence to the island of Nossi Bé in 1840, and to Mayotte, one of the Comoro Islands, in 1843, was used by Hamerton to persuade Said to sign the Hamerton Treaty in 1845. In terms of this Said agreed to end the export of slaves into his Arabian possessions and also the export of slaves from the mainland of Africa, except to Zanzibar, Pemba and Mafia. At the same time the Royal Navy obtained the right to intercept and search slavers. Theoretically this should have ended the slave trade from the East African coast to the French islands but it did not. The refusal of the French government to allow reciprocal search and visit rights meant that the French flag enjoyed immunity from interception by British ships; Arabs who could obtain the right to fly the French flag could pass unmolested through British anti-slavery patrols, and for a long time it did not seem as if the French were particularly careful to make sure that those who hoisted their flag had the unqualified right to do so.

- Compl-
cations** In terms of the Hamerton Treaty the slave trade between the East African coast and Zanzibar remained legal. The captains of British ships had to decide which dhows carried slaves bound for Zanzibar, which they could not touch, and which were bound for the East, which they could intercept. To complicate matters further, the institution of slavery itself was still legal, so that travellers were entitled to bring their domestic slaves with them, forcing British captains to try to distinguish between slaves that were held legally and those who were being transported for sale in Oman.
- Dhows** There were many practical difficulties capturing dhows, which were fast and manoeuvrable and could hug the shoreline where they could not easily be followed by British sailing ships. The moment a dhow caught sight of a British naval vessel it made for the shore, to be lost in a small creek, or to unload its cargo. Until steamships replaced sailing ships in the second half of the century, dhows were faster than the patrol boats, especially as it was mostly old ships that were employed on the East Coast Squadron. The dhows were frail craft and very lightly armed, however, so that if they were trapped on the open seas they usually surrendered without a fight.
- Majid** In 1856 a new era dawned in the history of European influence in East Africa. In that year David Livingstone crossed Africa and news of the devastation being wreaked by the slave trade in the interior soon filtered through to England and led to increased interest in the region. Seyyid Said died in 1856 and Hamerton a year later. British help in solving the disputes that followed Said's death gave England a greater hold on Zanzibar. When Said died his empire was divided, his son Majid being in control of the East African part of the empire. But two of Said's other sons, Thwain and Barghash, believed that they had a better claim to Zanzibar and the title of sultan, and tried to overthrow him. This was not the end of Majid's troubles. On taking up his appointment in 1858 the new British consul, Colonel C. R. Rigby, discovered that Hamerton had allowed the 1845 treaty to be largely ignored and evaded. He put pressure on the new ruler to put the provisions of that treaty into effect, but Majid was too weak to enforce unpopular measures on his unwilling subjects who saw their livelihood threatened.
- British
support** Increasingly Majid had to rely on British support to retain his position as sultan. In 1859 a war fleet, sent by Thwain with French approval to Zanzibar to oust Majid, was intercepted by the British and persuaded to return to Oman. By now Rigby had emerged openly as Majid's protector. Meanwhile the French consul in Zanzibar gave his support to Majid's brothers, and prepared to back this up by calling in the help of two French warships that had come to Zanzibar. It was only the diplomatic intervention of Rigby and the timely arrival of two British warships that prevented a very awkward situation from developing.
- Majid was powerless to move against the slave traders and so Rigby decided to grab the initiative himself. He called upon British captains to take vigorous action against slave-carrying dhows, many of which were sunk. But after he left Zanzibar in 1862 the slave trade soon resumed its normal flow.
- Suez
Canal** In 1869 the Suez Canal was opened and some of the traffic that came down through the canal found its way to Zanzibar. With the opening of a shorter route to the East the

waters around the east coast of Africa assumed greater strategic significance. British trade with Zanzibar had by now overtaken that of the Germans, French and Americans. By the 1870s British and British-Indian trade was twice that of Germany and almost three times that of the United States.

Dr John Kirk When Majid died in 1870, the French encouraged the new sultan, Barghash, to chart his own course without reference to the British. The British were not prepared to accept this, however, and Dr John Kirk applied steady pressure on Barghash to take action against the slave trade. As physician and naturalist Kirk had accompanied David Livingstone on most of his journeys between 1858 and 1863, when he was invalided back to England. He became vice-consul in Zanzibar in 1866, and in 1873 was promoted to consul-general. He was knighted in 1881 and served in Zanzibar until his retirement in 1887. Kirk paved the way for the special mission of Sir Bartle Frere to Barghash in 1873, which led to the sultan signing a treaty declaring the slave trade in his dominions illegal.

Sir Bartle Frere and the 1873 treaty Frere was as much concerned with the protection of British interests as he was with the suppression of the slave trade. He went to Zanzibar in the wake of a government decision to introduce a mail steamship service which would increase British influence and at the same time help to encourage the growth of legitimate trade to counter the slave trade. Frere put pressure on Barghash to end the slave trade by signing treaties with his rivals in Muscat and with other rulers in the Persian Gulf. He gave instructions for Kilwa to be blockaded and all dhows entering and leaving with slaves to be examined and allowed to proceed only if they could show that they had bona fide domestic slaves on board. The threat of an even more sweeping blockade forced Barghash to capitulate, and he signed a treaty stopping the export of all slaves from the mainland and the closing of all public slave markets in his territories. The infamous Zanzibar slave market closed and a cathedral was later built by the Universities' Mission to Central Africa on the site of the market, the altar being erected where the whipping post for wayward slaves had been. The 1873 treaty was forced upon Barghash; the British had given him no option. From the outset Barghash had undoubtedly known that his resistance and opposition would be of no avail, but he delayed signing the treaty until it was clear to all his subjects that he was against the treaty but had signed it only because he had no choice.

In-created British involvement The treaty of 1873 ushered in a period of close cooperation between Barghash and Kirk, who became firm friends. The sultan enjoyed British protection, but the price was compliance with increasing British involvement in his territories. Thus when the Egyptians seized the sultan's northern ports of Kismayu and Brava on the Benadir coast, Britain forced them to withdraw, but Kirk used the occasion to take steps to stop the slave trade on the Benadir coast. Slaves were still being transported along the coast from Kilwa to Mombasa, where they were smuggled to Pemba; the French engagé trade also continued. In 1876 Britain induced the sultan to forbid the transport of slaves in his dominions and to prohibit the equipping of caravans in his territory. When these measures resulted in disturbances at Kilwa it was the British who quelled them. Sir Lloyd Mathews trained and operated a force on the mainland to uphold the sultan's

authority on the coastal belt, suppressing riots and rebellion and stopping the movement of slaves.

**Britain's
hold on
the sul-
tan**

Britain was content to have a hold on the sultan and to exercise informal influence in East Africa. By 1880 the government had no intention of increasing its territorial commitments. When Sir William Mackinnon wanted to establish a company to administer and develop a large part of East Africa which Barghash had given him as a concession, the British government refused to allow him to take up the concession. Said and Majid and Barghash had never been rulers over a specific territory – they had influence rather than power, their empire was a commercial one, based on the collection of customs dues. But from the mid-1870s Kirk, who was one of the more influential of the ‘men on the spot’, increasingly felt that Barghash should turn his commercial empire into a political one. Whether or not the sultan wanted this was of less importance than the fact this was what Kirk wanted. ‘To Kirk the Sultan was the instrument of informal empire, the agent who would suppress the slave trade and promote legitimate commerce, and with it British influence, at little cost to the imperial treasury ... Barghash could be sure of British support only as long as he was useful and co-operative. Ominously the measures now being forced on him were not in the economic interests of his own subjects, whose prosperity depended on a steady supply of slave labour.’ In 1876 Kirk wrote: ‘We must strengthen him, or be dragged into the work ourselves, and that would be more entangling still.’¹

**Slave
trade
con-
tinues**

The 1873 and 1876 treaties did not immediately put an end to the slave trade. Slaves continued to be smuggled into Zanzibar. The death rate on Zanzibar was high and the birth rate low, so fresh supplies of slaves were constantly in demand. In any case the treaties did not affect the slave trade in the interior, and the sultan had no control over the actions of his subjects away from the coast. The East African slave trade across the Red Sea continued, as did the traffic on the mainland itself. The slave trade was an integral part of the arms and ivory trade and slaves and ivory were virtually unobtainable unless purchased with firearms. There was a large internal market for slaves in the interior. There were many plantations that required slaves, for example in the production of oil seeds in the northernmost part of Mozambique. There were new sugar and cereal plantations on the coast in which slave labour was used. Zanzibar and Pemba were fed from these plantations. There were also plantations along the caravan routes to service and feed the caravans. Slaves were also used as porters and soldiers. In the late 1870s it seemed as if the internal slave trade in the interior was increasing. Britain was anxious to put a stop to this trade but there was a limit to the steps it would take. It did not want to intervene in East Africa itself. What Britain did want, was to stop the slave trade and prevent other powers from intervening there. So Kirk, who was the real power in the land, encouraged Arab expansion into the East African interior. While Kirk welcomed Arab conquests, the missionaries who were working in the interior did not. They were appalled at the destruction and burning of villages, and the starving refugees who clamoured at their doors for sustenance and protection.

TRADE ROUTES INTO THE INTERIOR

African pioneers

Trade routes in the interior had been pioneered by the Africans themselves. The Yao had found their way from the vicinity of Lake Nyasa to the coast long before coastal traders decided to go inland. Kamba traders southeast of Mount Kenya had traded in ivory for many years before the coastal traders moved in and took over their routes. The Nyamwezi of west central Tanzania played a leading role in the pioneering of a number of trade routes in the interior. In the eighteenth century goods along Nyamwezi routes had found their way to Uganda and Ruanda. The Nyamwezi had also opened up a route to the coast which they were using about 1800, and it was this route that the Swahili-Arab traders from the coast employed when they made their first forays into the interior. Although ivory had always trickled through from the interior to the coast, the growth in the demand for ivory in the nineteenth century made a more systematic approach necessary for its gathering. As early as 1811 caravans from the coast were reaching into central Tanzania, and a decade later Swahili-Arab caravans were found on the other side of Lake Tanganyika in modern Zaïre. By mid-century the Arabs had established the town of Unyanyembe or Tabora, and Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika.

Arab domination

Although Africans in the interior had pioneered these routes, in many cases they were ousted by the Arabs who had three great advantages over the indigenous traders – they had a wider range of products to offer, they had modern arms, access to credit, and they knew the Zanzibar trading system and could influence it. Africans in the interior had no way of tapping into the financing services provided by local Indian financiers. And the African traders of the interior were discriminated against when they arrived at the coast; they were forced to pay higher duties on goods they wished to sell than the Swahili-Arabs. But although people such as the Kamba and the Nyamwezi found themselves being ousted to some extent, the Yao further southwards retained control over the routes between Lake Nyasa and Kilwa, probably the main routes in East Africa for slaves, who came principally from the Lake Nyasa region. The Yao were too strong and well entrenched to be pushed aside.

Other commodities

The Swahili-Arab advent into the interior saw the expansion of the existing trade routes. They became major arteries through which flowed a considerable variety of goods. If one considers the Mozambique port of Quilimane, it is clear that the export production was dominated by ivory and slaves and few other products found their way there. But in the case of Zanzibar, slaves and ivory were not the only commodities to flow down these routes – there were other products such as iron (including iron implements), copper, salt, tobacco, food, gum copal and cowries, cloves, coconuts, hides and sesame. The slave and ivory trade generated vigorous trading activity and thus promoted trade in other articles as well. In East and Central Africa many of the factors that had aided the development of trade in West Africa were absent. In East Africa there were no navigable rivers comparable with those in West Africa, although even there they were the exception rather than the rule. Traders had to rely heavily on head portage, the most expensive way of conveying goods, so that it was not financially viable to transport many of the products of the far interior to the coast, except for ivory and slaves. The slaves carried the ivory to the coast, where both slaves

and ivory were sold! In the western Sudan the need for vital products such as salt acted as a generator of trade, and in Central Africa it also did so, but in much of East Africa salt came from densely populated areas so that there was little incentive to transport large quantities of it over long distances. Despite these limiting factors, the ivory and slave trades did expand the long-distance routes so that there were more of them and they were used far more frequently to carry a wider variety of goods over longer distances. By the middle of the nineteenth century the value of gum copal passing through Zanzibar was £35 000. Food production was greatly stimulated. There were now many more people who had to be fed and who did not grow their own food. This applied to those employed in caravans, and to the increasing number of persons living in the inland trading centres and on Zanzibar and Pemba. Most of the agricultural goods destined for the islands and for servicing the caravans were grown close to the coast and did not come from the interior, but there was also a market for grain inland, for example along the caravan routes. An increase in food prices made the extension of agricultural activity worthwhile.

**Main
trade
routes**

The main trade route from the coast went to Tabora. From here a number of routes radiated out. One went northwest around Lake Victoria into Uganda; another branched off towards the southwest around the southern end of Lake Tanganyika; this route which went to the Lunda empire of Kazembe and from there to the kingdom of the Mwata Yamvo, was in touch with Luanda on the Atlantic coast. So in effect this was a trans-continental trade route. A branch of this also filtered into the Ovimbundu network to Benguela. Another major route from Tabora went directly west to Ujiji on the shores of Lake Tanganyika and across the lake into modern Zaïre. Along the central route to Tabora and beyond, and on the northern routes, the slave trade did not appear to assume major proportions until after the 1850s.

**North-
ern
routes**

There were also a number of smaller northern routes which went from the vicinity of Lake Victoria and Lake Rudolph to harbours north of Zanzibar, such as Malindi and Mombasa. These northerly routes to the coast were more direct than the one via Tabora and from the outset would have enjoyed more importance had it not been for the presence of the Masai of modern Kenya whose cattle raiding on the open plains discouraged traders. The Kamba monopolised the trade route between the Kikuyu and Mombasa until the Arabs gained control of Kikuyu trade in the 1860s. Virtually the only densely populated and large states on the routes north of Tabora were around Lake Victoria. It was here that Buganda was busy expanding its authority.

**South-
ern
routes**

To the south many routes linked up with Tabora. But some had other destinations. The Makua and Yao took their slaves to Mozambique and Kilwa. Routes from both north and south of Lake Nyasa were in touch with the trans-continental trade via Kazembe. Portuguese initiative fuelled the development of these trade routes from the Atlantic side. By the second half of the seventeenth century, Portuguese activity on the west coast of Central Africa was restricted to the hinterland of Luanda and Benguela. Although direct Portuguese control did not extend very far into the interior, caravans from Luanda and Benguela led by mulatto pombeiros found their way to the Mwata Yamvo. The Luanda route flourished in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth cen-

turies when there was a good demand for slaves, and the Benguela route came into its own when the ivory trade became more important.

**The
Mwato
Yamvo**

The Lunda empire of the Mwato Yamvo was the most important of a number of large political institutions in the savanna half of Central Africa. This empire had begun to emerge about 1700 and at least until the mid-nineteenth century it enjoyed great unity and stability. There were copper mines in the southeastern part of the empire and Lunda craftsmen were very good at converting copper ingots into an alloy which made the fine trade wire that was used to produce bangles. One of the most vital trade articles was salt, which was a scarce resource throughout the Lunda empire. The Lunda empire also did very well indeed from the slave trade. At least 2 000 – 3 000 slaves a year were being sent out from the Lunda sphere of influence. Because the chiefs were in charge of the administration of justice and the conduct of local and national wars, which were two principal ways of obtaining slaves, they controlled the slave trade, which was an important element in the growth of their power and wealth.

**The
Mwata
Kazembe.**

From the kingdom of the Mwato Yamvo the trade route went eastwards to the Lunda kingdom of the Mwata Kazembe on the Luapula River to the southeast of Lake Mweru. By the middle of the nineteenth century Kazembe controlled large parts of modern southern Katanga and Zambia. It had a vigorous external trade. Although exotic goods such as metalware, ornaments, shells and even crockery came in from the Atlantic coast, its trading links eastwards were significant. Although contact was made with the Portuguese station at Tete early in the nineteenth century, this did not develop into a major trading artery because the strong pull of the Zanzibar trading entrepôt drew trade away from the lower Zambezi and the Portuguese possessions. By the 1830s Kazembe's main trading links eastward were with Zanzibar via Tabora or Kilwa.

**Avoid-
ance of
Portu-
guese
posses-
sions**

In the early part of the nineteenth century ivory traders who had a choice preferred to send their ivory to the east coast rather than the west. While the presence of increasingly large amounts of Indian capital on the east coast undoubtedly influenced their decision, the most important reason for avoiding Portuguese possessions was that the government in Portugal attempted to keep the price of ivory down artificially by making it a government monopoly. Ivory traders in West Central Africa, for whom the transportation of ivory to the east coast was impractical, also tended to keep away from Angola and take their wares to the trading stations of other European nations north of Angola. They took not only their ivory but also their palm kernels, beeswax, coffee, raw cotton and rubber. British trade on the coast between Angola and Cameroon assumed considerable proportions.

**Value
of ex-
ports**

In 1843, although it still attempted to manipulate the price of ivory and keep it down artificially, the Portuguese government lifted its monopoly of the ivory trade, and more tusks found their way to the Portuguese west coast. Between 1844 and 1881 the value of goods (mainly ivory, wax, copal, palm oil products and coffee) that passed through Angolan ports increased sevenfold. But there was still a relative decline from the days of the export of slaves. Thus in the early 1870s the value of all of these products was only double the value of slave exports in the 1820s.

THE EFFECTS OF THE SLAVE AND IVORY TRADE

The formation of secondary empires

Swahili-Arabs When the Swahili-Arabs themselves raided for slaves they usually did so at night; villages were surrounded and burned down and gardens were destroyed, because starvation favoured the conditions in which the slave trade thrived. The Swahili-Arabs were ruthless ivory hunters and razed the villages of those who stood in their way. But this applies particularly to the first Arabs to enter the region. The merchants who followed later adopted a settled way of life, developing thriving plantations, worked, of course, by slave labour, introducing new crops, building mosques and surrounding themselves with many of the trappings of life at the coast. Such was the situation at Tabora. They obtained much of the ivory and a good proportion of the slaves they required from local rulers, making contracts with them for the delivery of these commodities. So they had to remain on good terms with local rulers. The Arabs formed only a small minority of the populations of the areas in which they settled so they could not force their will on the inhabitants, and sought their cooperation instead, deliberately befriending them. Even marriages between traders and daughters of Nyamwezi chiefs were contracted. Islam did not spread in the interior in the same way as it did in the western Sudan. One reason for this is that the Arab population in the interior remained small. Also, the Arabs made no real attempt to convert the indigenous inhabitants. The basis of their relationship was trade and only in the immediate vicinity of their settlements did the local population adopt the Arab way of life and their religion. Thus while the coast was overwhelmingly Muslim in character, communities in the interior retained their traditional pagan culture.

Political involvement The Arabs in East Africa were interested in trading profits and not in political authority, but they gradually exercised some control over the surrounding areas. Swahili-Arab traders interfered in local disputes, taking sides with one chief against another. The political impact was most pronounced among the Nyamwezi, where there was a large population of Swahili-Arabs in places such as Tabora. They became an important element in the political elite of the polity and played a crucial role in the struggle for political authority. Although they themselves did not try to take power their influence was often the vital element that enabled one or other party to triumph. The Swahili-Arabs became involved in local wars and disputes, but their aim was to secure or further their commercial interests. Although in time they did come to exercise political leverage, it was usually exercised indirectly, and for the sake of trade.

Shifting frontiers The traders' frontier was constantly shifting because as the elephants were wiped out in one area the hunters, followed by the traders, moved deeper into the interior. This shifting hunting and trading frontier was, at the same time, a frontier of slave-raiding and warfare, for the traders were keen to buy slaves as well as ivory, and the elephant hunters with their skill in firearms were well suited to gathering slaves as well as ivory. By the second half of the nineteenth century traders were moving into the eastern half of modern Zaïre and were putting pressure on chiefs to supply ivory. As the frontier shifted, those who had been left behind faced economic collapse. The area had been

devastated by war and there were no more elephants. Many communities joined up with others in heavily fortified villages in order to protect themselves against slave raiders.

Firearms In East Central Africa firearms enabled coastal traders to venture inland in the early nineteenth century, and it was the spread of firearms in the interior from the middle of the century that witnessed an acceleration of hunting and slaving activities deep into Central Africa. According to one estimate about 20 million guns were imported into Africa in the nineteenth century – and most of them came in after about 1860. Security lay in the possession of arms and so African rulers participated as much as they could in the international trade to obtain guns. States with easier access to firearms had an advantage over rival states. Within a state possession of firearms tilted the balance between rival factions. Political authority came to depend more on military power than religious authority. The lure of imported goods could encourage subordinate rulers to loosen the chains of dependence, so we find many kings taking vigorous action to keep long distance trade strictly under their own control. Access to guns and wealth from trade were major incentives for leaders wishing to build up large followings. Political office became more attractive and thus more keenly contested because with it came tribute in ivory and other valuable articles.

**Sec-
ondary
king-
doms** The people with the best guns were traders and caravan leaders, and many of them set themselves up around the borders of the traditional states, operating at first as traders and hunters, but later becoming warlords who obtained slaves, ivory and other products as tribute. A number of secondary kingdoms were established in East Central Africa. There was a pattern to the establishment of 'loose, military overlords created by the magnates of the caravan trade to safeguard the sources of their wealth'. Professor Oliver describes a typical pattern of development: 'Especially where traditional polities were small and weak, traders defended themselves by travelling with armed escorts and establishing fortified depots for their goods. From there, it was a short step to taking hostages or seizing cattle in order to assure the supply of ivory, slaves or rubber at attractive prices, and this in turn often led on to the trader settling down as a ruler, taking tribute from the indigenous population by military means.'²

**Tippu
Tip** One of the most noteworthy of the secondary states, that established in the mid-1870s by Tippu Tip, a Swahili-Arab coastal trader, was in the heart of Central Africa, west of Lake Tanganyika, in the country west and south of the Nyamwezi. From his headquarters at Kasongo he organised a state with a strong military force to back up his demands. He had plantations laid out and roads built, and he monopolised the sale of ivory. Tippu also appointed agents to administer justice and collect tribute. He did not raid for slaves in his own land, but neighbouring peoples were raided for slaves and ivory.

**Miram-
bo** Another secondary state in this region was established by Mirambo, a young Nyamwezi chief, who welded a considerable number of Nyamwezi groups into a formidable unit. He was the ruler of a small state to the west of Tabora, and in the 1860s with the help of a body of warriors he managed to gain control of some of the surrounding states. Between 1870 and his death in 1884 he undertook many campaigns and expanded the

area under his control. By 1880 he had gained control of the route between Tabora and Ujiji. The Arabs of Tabora had to pay him if they wished to use the route. Because of his control of the country between Tabora and Lake Victoria he was also in a position to threaten the trade route leading northwestwards to Buganda. The basis for Mirambo's strength was his army, and when he died the 'empire' he had built up collapsed because there was no-one who could keep the army together. Mirambo was not well disposed towards the Arabs, nor was Msiri, who conducted similar operations west of Lake Mweru in the copper-rich region of Katanga.

Rise of the Chokwe empire In West Central Africa the rise of the Chokwe trading empire was one of the most remarkable tales of expansionist enterprise in nineteenth-century Central Africa. Birmingham writes that: 'In the short space of fifty years the Chokwe had risen from being a small, remote, forest people to being one of the most dynamic economic forces in Central Africa. They had also become one of the most powerful military forces, and their early, inconspicuous migrations were increasingly replaced by violent raiding. By the 1870s they were a match for any rival including the large, organized empire of their Lunda neighbours, which they succeeded in subverting and almost destroying.'³

Chokwe ivory trade In the eighteenth century the Chokwe of the highland area of Angola played only a small role in trade, exporting mainly ivory and wax. They were not a major provider of slaves. In the 1840s they were engaged in the export of wax, but with the abolition of the Portuguese royal monopoly of ivory in 1843, there was a great revival in the ivory trade, an opportunity which the Chokwe were well positioned to exploit. The Imbangala of Kasanje had been the major long-distance traders in the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century their place was taken largely by the Ovimbundu of the Benguela hinterland. They became the main suppliers of firearms to the Chokwe, who were skilled hunters and good gunsmiths. In the late 1840s there were plenty of elephants in the Chokwe woodland. This woodland was the closest region to the coast where elephants were still plentiful at that time. So they became large-scale ivory hunters. By the middle of the nineteenth century there were no more elephants in their area and they had to go further afield to the north and east. There were still many elephants in Lunda territory. The Lunda, who were not great hunters and had not utilised the forests in their area, welcomed the Chokwe hunters, who were willing to pay a tusk for every elephant shot in the Lunda region.

Chokwe slave trade The new prosperity meant an increase in Chokwe numbers. Pressure of population as well as the search for fresh supplies of elephant forced them to expand, and in the course of this expansion they became major dealers in slaves. The Chokwe moved eastwards following the line of forests. Soon they were among the greatest slave traders in Central Africa, and they added considerably to their own slave holdings, purchasing many slave women. Families increased and after the 1850s a slow process of Chokwe migration northwards began.

Chokwe migration Chokwe expansion was also given impetus by the new demand by Europeans for wild rubber which could be obtained fairly easily from most of the forests. In the late 1860s the Chokwe began to produce rubber, tapped from forest vines. But in their own area

this did not last long as the methods of tapping latex were very wasteful, so the rubber collectors moved north, hastening Chokwe migration. When there was no more ivory and rubber in the vicinity of the upper Kasai River, the Chokwe stopped being producers and became traders, obtaining ivory from the middle Kasai and eventually from among the Luba. Very soon they no longer practised their traditional skills as producers and they became trading middlemen. They set up their own routes and caravan systems and it was not long before they were offering serious competition to the older carriers.

**The
Yeke
and
Msiri**

The Yeke played a considerable role in the changing balance of political power in Central Africa. By the 1850s the Nyamwezi were large-scale caravan operators and they bought ivory and Katanga copper from Kazembe. It was not long before they began to bypass Kazembe to trade directly with the copper producers. The Sunbwa Nyamwezi were particularly successful in this and in Katanga became known as the Yeke. Besides penetration of the western parts of Kazembe the Yeke were also making inroads into the borders of the Mwata Yamvo. At first this penetration was peaceful and aimed at trade. The Yeke were welcomed because they brought foreign goods with them. Then along came Msiri ('the mosquito'). He exploited differences between the various clans and attracted a large number of followers. Under Msiri the Yeke moved to attain political power. Msiri began expanding from his base on the borders of the Lunda kingdom in the 1850s. To keep his warriors contented Msiri raided far and wide for cattle and women and other booty, coming to control much of Katanga and intruding on the area controlled by the Mwato Kazembe; he campaigned against the Luba in the north and by about 1870 he was strong enough to challenge Kazembe overlordship.

**Garen-
ganze**

Many joined Msiri and by the 1880s his new kingdom of Garenganze had grown to over 40 villages of followers. Through intervention in his neighbours' disputes, his influence soon covered most of the area between the Lualaba and the Luapula. Garenganze became one of the most important and successful of the conquest states of Central Africa in the nineteenth century. His initial success may have been due to access to firearms, but his later success depended on his effective administration and system of provincial governors, who levied the ivory tax that lay at the heart of Msiri's wealth. He had a monopoly of tusks taken in his territory. Because Garenganze was so isolated from the major trade routes, elephants were plentiful after the 1870s, whereas areas closer to the coast had been hunted out. From a levy on copper production he moved to a state monopoly, producing wire, bracelets and ingots for surrounding markets. The slaves were obtained by warfare.

**Decline
of Ka-
zembe**

While the new Yeke kingdom of Garenganze undermined Kazembe from the west, the Mwato Kazembe was also fatally weakened in the east as the Swahili-Arabs penetrated the interior and settled there. The inability of the Kazembe rulers to satisfy rising expectations led to internal conflict which was easily exploited by the increasingly strong traders from outside. The Swahili-Arabs intervened between factions, weakening the old order and increasing their own power. Local chiefs were overthrown, while the allegiance of many of the remaining chiefs was given to the Swahili-Arabs rather than Kazembe.

- The Ngoni** While the Arabs were penetrating the interior, to the south a new wave of immigrants exploded onto the Central and East African scene. During the Mfecane (Difaqane) in southern Africa (which literally means the time of crushing and enforced migration) many refugees fled from Shaka after quarrelling with or falling foul of the Zulu king. One group that fled in about 1820 was led by Zwangendaba and they spent the next 15 years wandering about southern Mozambique. The Ngoni, as they were known north of the Limpopo, were schooled in the military techniques developed by Shaka, and the peoples beyond the Limpopo could offer little resistance. They wreaked havoc among the Shona between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers, and delivered the final blow to the crumbling Rozvi empire. The Rozvi kingdom of the Changamires was part of the Shona-speaking peoples who populated most of Zimbabwe and a large part of Mozambique.
- Ngoni invasions** The Ngoni crossed the Zambezi in 1835 and moved northwards along the length of Lake Nyasa, on its west side, leaving a trail of destruction behind them. They eventually settled at Mapupo between Lake Nyasa and Lake Tanganyika. After Zwangendaba's death in the mid-1840s the invaders broke up into a number of smaller groups. One of these groups virtually depopulated parts of western and southern Tanzania with their raids. Other Ngoni groups turned southwards, finally settling to the east and west of Lake Nyasa. Although they took many slaves, they incorporated most of them into their society. They were always in need of agricultural labour to feed their standing armies. Remnants of tribes were incorporated into the Ngoni; other remnants joined together and remodelled themselves on Ngoni lines to withstand attacks.
- Disruption of population** The Ngoni invasions resulted in much dislocation and redistribution of population. The invasions added to an already unstable situation, and in the chaotic aftermath of the invasions the neighbourhood of Lake Nyasa became a fertile raiding ground for slaves. The Chewa to the west of the lake were probably the worst victim of slave raids in the entire region.
- The Yao** In the Lake Nyasa area there were many small stateless societies. One of the large polities that lived in the area was the Yao, whose villages lay between the lake and the sea. The Yao had originally been loosely organised in small groups, but by mid-century they were in larger settlements under chiefs who were fairly dominant. Historians have portrayed this change as being due to the Ngoni invasions, but it seems as if it started earlier, and that the impetus was provided by their trading activities. The Yao suffered from the Ngoni raids but they were great slave raiders themselves and were also responsible for much disruption south and west of Lake Nyasa. The guns the Yao obtained served a dual purpose – they were used for protection against Ngoni attacks and for slave raiding. Portuguese freebooters also obtained slaves from the area south of the lake, and between them the Portuguese, the Yao and the Ngoni virtually depopulated this region. In the unsettled state of affairs bands of warriors wandered about pillaging and were sometimes employed by Arab traders to engage in slave raiding. This was therefore an area from which many slaves came.
- Matabele** Another Zulu off-shoot also penetrated northwards when, after their defeat by the Boers in 1836, the Ndebele of Mzilikazi fled across the Limpopo River sowing destruc-

tion in their path. They settled in Shona country in modern-day Zimbabwe and here Mzilikazi and his successor Lobengula created a tightly knit military state, assimilating many Shona. North of the Limpopo they were known as the Matabele.

Internal changes

General changes Not all societies were affected in the same way, but there were some general changes that altered key aspects of the way of life of many peoples. Whereas chiefs had depended earlier upon tribute from the people who worked their lands, they now needed to rely much less on their subjects, sometimes even selling them as slaves if prices were right. They now depended on mercenaries to uphold their power. Some chiefs managed to collect tolls from caravans as a source of income, particularly if they controlled a river crossing or monopolised a vital waterhole in a dry area. Rulers of strong indigenous states could demand a share of the profits from the caravans. Larger caravans could negotiate more favourable tolls with major chiefs than small caravans could, and this led to caravans linking up; large caravans were also better able to defend themselves.

The Shamba kingdom In the case of the Shamba kingdom, which was situated southeast of Mount Kilimanjaro, the capital and the areas of greatest population were in a mountainous region that was avoided by caravans, which preferred travelling along the plains. So power drained from the king to a minor governor who took over control of a major stopping place for caravans, and gained access to arms, with which to challenge the king's power and also to assemble parties of elephant hunters. He relied on mercenaries for his power. Another destabilising factor coincided with this development, and that was the rapid increase in the 1870s in the demand for slaves for the Pemba clove plantations. By the mid-1870s local chiefs were preying on their own subjects and making war on neighbours in order to feed this demand for slaves. So the orderly and peaceful Shamba kingdom broke up into a number of small chiefdoms, competing with each other to establish ties with traders to whom they sold slaves.

Effect on local industries The Swahili-Arab contact changed traditional values and cultures. Africans developed a taste for foreign commodities such as cloth, including American calico. There was a market in East and Central Africa for items such as beads and copper wire; the latter was used to make coiled bracelets, which became popular ornaments. There was a demand for many items of dress. Traditional fashions gradually underwent a change. Handcraft industries in East and Central Africa were not nearly so numerous or flourishing as the industries in the Sahel on the shores of the Sahara. One of the reasons for this is that manufacturers abroad had easy access to local markets. There was no opportunity for local craftsmen to compete. Although, as we have seen, the trade in ivory and slaves led to a great increase in the trade of other goods, and therefore in theory should have stimulated local production and manufacturing, it also allowed the import of cheap European manufactured goods into the interior. Industries such as the bark-cloth industry of the Lakes region and the hand-woven cloth industry in southwestern Tanzania were killed or retarded by the import of cheap goods from abroad. Much of the increased trade did not stimulate local industries. Of course this applied

particularly to the East African coast. For centuries mangrove poles had been a major export from East Africa to Arabia and Iran. The exporters themselves, or at least the crews of their boats, cut down the trees along river banks and estuaries close to the coast. So this provided no real chance for the development of local industry. The same is true of cowrie shells, taken from the Kenya coast. The shippers gathered the shells themselves. Copal (a wild resin which in the nineteenth century was used to make varnish) fetched very low prices in its natural state, and local producers received poor prices while the cleaning of the gum was done by foreign merchants, or by manufacturers abroad. Although there were local industries such as the copper work in the lands of the Mwato Yamvo, the great quest for slaves and ivory, and the expansion of the ivory frontier in particular, did much to harm such industries.

Ethnic diversity Building styles also underwent a metamorphosis. Before the nineteenth century most peoples built circular huts, but the rectangular buildings popular among the Swahili of the coast soon spread to the interior. Towns became bigger and with more ethnic diversity. More people took foreign wives. For example, most of Seyyid Said's wives were Africans, and his children were fluent in Kiswahili rather than Arabic. All of Said's successors as sultans in the nineteenth century were born of slave women.

Elephant hunting Until then ivory had been used simply as an ornament, a by-product of hunting elephants for meat or killing them because they were threatening villages or crops. Traditionally elephants were hunted during the dry season by hunter bands consisting of between 20 to 30 men armed with bows and arrows, spears, clubs and axes. With the arrival of the coastal caravans this changed. Now the aim was to kill as many elephants as possible. There were more expeditions and hunting was no longer confined to traditional bands; new ways of ensnaring elephants were devised. The desire to sell ivory privately hastened the end of the community system of hunting. This process gathered momentum as firearms became more common in the interior from about 1860. Professional hunters spent their time following the herds. People thus tended to move about more, and not to live in such close-knit units, so that the authority of the elders lessened. A new breed of men came to prominence. Traders became wealthy and built up followings, dispensing patronage and winning respect and prestige outside the traditional social framework of the society. Those with access to imported articles gained influence at the expense of ordinary hunters and traditional religious leaders. Elephant hunters gained tremendous prestige in their societies and had more social status than did ordinary hunters.

As has been indicated in various places in this book, there is no agreement on the harm done to African societies by the slave trade. In East and Central Africa, on the surface at least, this would appear to have been greater than in the case of West Africa. Certain historians have come down very heavily in blaming the slave trade for retarding the region economically. The rural economy, so it has been argued, was violently disrupted, many of the most productive people were exported and contagious diseases that had hitherto been unknown in the interior of Central Africa, such as smallpox and cholera, wreaked havoc.

Effect of slave trade on East Africa Historians by no means agree, however, on the effect of the slave trade on the population of East Africa. There were never as many slaves taken from East Africa as went across the Sahara and to the Atlantic coast. Even during the peak of the East African slave trade in the nineteenth century the bulk of the slaves were taken from a relatively small area, represented on the coast within the limits between Kilwa and Quilimane and in the interior extending just beyond Lake Nyasa. The major source for slaves was the Chewa-speaking peoples west of Lake Nyasa, and there were no signs of depopulation among them. Even in the twentieth century they continued to export labour. Although it could be argued that the slave trade in Central Africa was more widespread than in East Africa, when looking at the question of the effect of the slave trade on population it should also be borne in mind that many of the slaves captured in the interior were relocated on the coast and were not lost to Africa. So although there was a redistribution of population, as reflected to an extent in the fairly substantial growth in the population of the main coastal cities, this did not represent a population loss.

Diseases But having said this, it is clear that the population of East Africa as a whole was declining between the late 1880s and the end of the 1920s. One may advance certain contributory factors. One is that the caravans introduced new diseases to the interior. These took a heavy toll of peoples who initially had no immunity to these sicknesses. Thus throughout the nineteenth century outbreaks of smallpox and cholera occurred frequently on all the caravan routes. African diseases such as sleeping sickness and tick-borne fevers, which had earlier been confined to certain areas, became far more widespread as the pace of commercial penetration quickened. Towards the end of the nineteenth century diseases such as jiggers, imported from the Equatorial coast of West Africa, and major outbreaks of sleeping sickness and fever, killed many people. By limiting grazing areas, the rinderpest epidemic at the end of the century meant that there was more undisturbed bush which the tsetse fly needed to thrive, and this helps to explain why there were also serious outbreaks of sleeping sickness.

Great Lakes states By no means all societies were traumatised by the slave and ivory trades. These trades fuelled the growth of Omani power in East Africa. Some states succeeded in keeping control of trade in their hands. In the area of the Great Lakes, strong states such as Buganda did not become prey to the disruptions inherent in the Swahili-Arab quest for ivory and slaves, and rulers turned the demand to their own advantage, using it to build their own strength, maintaining monopolies over the trade in tusks and firearms.

Because of the favourable rainfall and a stable agricultural environment based on bananas, grain and livestock, which generated a surplus that could maintain a large population, conditions in the Great Lakes were conducive to the founding of large states. It was a densely populated area. By at least 1750 there were markets all along the shores of the lakes and market centres inland. Sorghum, millet, honey, peas, dried bananas, coffee, skins and hides and copper wire were traded, but the staples of the trade were salt and iron.

In the nineteenth century the states in the region were still evolving, still incorporating new peoples, a process that was accompanied by considerable resistance. There was a constant struggle between the more powerful states in the region for control of areas

that could deliver agricultural tribute, and also a struggle for control of resources such as salt, cattle and iron. There was a major contest over the control of the trade routes and the systems of distribution.

Changes in relations

By the middle of the nineteenth century there were many kingdoms of varying size, but the three largest were Buganda, Bunyoro and Burundi. Prior to the advent of the Nyamwezi and Swahili-Arabs onto the scene, ivory and slaves had not been traded in the area. As early as 1844 traders from the coast reached Buganda. It was not long before the new trade began to change relationships in the Great Lakes region. The gap between larger and the smaller states widened rapidly as the major states reaped the benefits of outside contacts, obtaining firearms, trade goods and missionaries. Traditional kings who wielded a great deal of power were able to keep control of the slave and ivory trade in their own hands. They were not prepared to sell too many slaves so ivory was a greater trade item than slaves. It was customary in this region for one tusk of every elephant killed to go to the king, and when Nyamwezi hunters began large-scale hunting of elephant and threatened to disrupt this old practice, the kings were quick to take action and bring the hunting of elephant under their own wing, hiring Nyamwezi as royal elephant hunters. The kings were strong enough to enforce their will and the trade in ivory thus remained in their hands. Firearms purchased with the proceeds of the sale of ivory were also retained by the rulers. Firearms obtained by the larger states increased their advantage over the smaller polities.

Bugandan expansion

Under the rule of kabakas Suna (1830–1856) and Mutesa (1856–1884) Bugandan power and authority expanded at the expense of Bunyoro, which had previously dominated them. Bunyoro was eventually confined to a small triangle between Buganda, Lake Albert and the Victoria Nile. Mutesa kept the trade in firearms under his control and thus had the means to raid his neighbours, steadily increasing Bugandan wealth by enlarging the area from which the state obtained tribute. Slaves and ivory were sold to Zanzibar merchants, and the trading articles that the Swahili-Arabs supplied, particularly firearms, enabled kabaka Mutesa to build up a permanent group of musketeers to form a solid and formidable core for his army of peasants armed with spears.

The Nyamwezi

The Nyamwezi were the first large group to make prolonged contact with the Swahili-Arab traders. They welcomed the coastal men as the bringers of prosperity and as the means to firearms. Although they lost their monopoly of the routes they had developed, in a number of ways they were able to share in the expanded trade being carried on these routes. The appearance of Swahili-Arab caravans in the interior had a major impact on the Nyamwezi. Nyamwezi were often employed by the caravans, sometimes acting as guides; they became well known as porters, and men who had made the journey to the coast were held in high esteem in society. Although the Nyamwezi sometimes helped the Swahili-Arabs in their slave raids, and small groups of Nyamwezi did participate in the slave trade on their own behalf, the Nyamwezi as a whole were not enthusiastic slave gatherers. They did not enslave their own people, but at the same time they were strong enough to prevent the Swahili-Arabs from attacking them and taking slaves. With the increase in trade many Nyamwezi were away from home for considerable periods of time. Porters, for example, were often absent for months as they

had to wait at the coast until a return caravan was ready to depart for the interior. There was thus a great shortage of labour for tasks such as hut building and the collection of honey; it was difficult to find enough men to prepare the soil so that the women could plant. So in time the Nyamwezi turned increasingly to buying slaves to ease the labour shortage. With the increase in the demand for agricultural produce to feed the caravans and the growing number of residents of the inland trading centres, as well as for export to non-grainproducing areas, the price of agricultural products rose and the Nyamwezi put slaves to work on food production.

The Nyamwezi did not merely find employment in Swahili-Arab caravans. They also fitted out their own caravans. These were mostly small caravans but by the end of the 1850s there were more Nyamwezi caravans going to the coast than coastal caravans going inland. They also sent caravans to the copper-producing area of Katanga, where Nyamwezi groups were responsible for establishing Garenganze.

Terms of trade, underdevelopment

Effects of trade in wasting assets

There is no space here for a discussion of the underdevelopment theory, but even more obviously than in the case of West Africa, when we look at East and Central Africa it is clear that the international demand for slaves and ivory was a major factor in transforming the economy of the region, and that the search for these products resulted in the neglect of other, more productive activities of societies. While slaves and ivory were readily available the problems inherent in heavy reliance on wasting assets were not so apparent, but when the supplies were exhausted or more difficult to come by, latent tensions and disintegrative tendencies rapidly came to the fore. Societies could not simply return to their old ways. They had become locked into the international trading system, and had become dependent upon the imported foreign articles that could only be obtained by continuing to supply the international market with what it wanted. Perhaps it could also be argued that the search for ivory and slaves had positive aspects, unexpected spinoffs in the short term, in that it stimulated the trade in other articles, and that even in the long term, by bringing about new state formations and breaking up old ones, the results were not entirely negative. There can be little doubt, however, that the nature of the way in which East and Central Africa were drawn into the world economy had calamitous results for many of the societies involved.

Dependence on the slave trade

One can examine the effects of underdevelopment on various levels. The way that Africa was being integrated into the world economy was reflected in the number of slaves captured. In the early part of the century, before the British had signed any anti-slavery treaties or patrolled East African waters, 10 000 to 15 000 slaves were probably being exported from East Africa every year. By the 1860s, by which time treaties had been signed and patrols instituted, according to one estimate 70 000 slaves a year were being sold in the Zanzibar market. Although no reliable figures are available, it would seem that for a number of years after 1873, when it became illegal to ship slaves by sea, even more slaves were being traded. What on the surface is even more puzzling is that the number of slaves traded was rising although the price obtained for slaves was either static or dropping. How does one explain this phenome-

non? The answer lies in the fact that once a society had geared itself to the capture and sale of slaves as a living, it could not simply stop this way of life when prices declined. When prices rose in the occasional boom they went further into the interior in search of slaves; when prices fell again, they could not simply withdraw. They were locked into the international trade. The decimation of elephant herds often put pressure on societies to increase their sale of slaves. And the fall in the price of slaves placed pressure on them to increase that supply even further. With the same situation existing in neighbouring territories, rulers often had recourse to enslaving their own people, which contributed to the further undermining of the stability of the polity.

**Exam-
ples of
under-
devel-
opment**

The changes which the growth in the ivory trade brought about accelerated in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. To a greater or lesser extent all societies were locked into the slave and ivory trade. It was especially their dependence upon the latter that had such a disastrous effect as the supply of elephants ran out. We have briefly discussed elements of underdevelopment among people such as the Nyamwezi and the Shamba. A few examples from societies that were devastated by the effects of the ivory and slave trade will illustrate underdevelopment at work.

**The
Zam-
bezi
valley**

In the Zambezi valley Portuguese and African hunters and traders, some of whom were ex-soldiers, continued to live in great luxury on their huge prazos or estates, surrounded by many retainers and paying scant attention to any orders issued by the governor in Mozambique. By the nineteenth century the descendants of these prazeros were largely Africanised. To all intents and purposes they were independent African chiefs. It had been hoped that agricultural and mineral products would be produced in profusion, but as in so many other East and Central African societies, the prazeros gradually became gatherers of commodities rather than producers. They had close relations with neighbouring states and traded with them for gold, slaves and ivory. The dominant Changamire empire had restricted their access to the gold-producing areas to the southwest of the Zambezi River, but with the decline of the Maravi empire to the south of Lake Nyasa in the eighteenth century, they focused their attention in this direction and came to dominate the ivory trade in the lower Zambezi valley. They had armies composed of slaves. These were known as chikunda and were used to collect taxes, to trade and raid for slaves as well as to hunt for ivory. The increased demand for slaves saw an extension of hunting and raiding. But there were limits to this. When the ivory was exhausted and they had to increase the number of slaves they sold, it became more difficult to obtain supplies from neighbouring peoples, who also had guns and were themselves caught up in the search for slaves. The prazeros on the lower Zambezi were forced into selling their own subjects into slavery, and sometimes even members of their chikunda armies. Those liable to be enslaved revolted or moved away, and by 1830 most of the small prazos had been destroyed. The remaining ones were consolidated into a few large prazos. By the 1870s there were three such states ruled by dynastic families in the Zambezi valley between the confluence of the Shire River and Zumbo, and there was another conquest state south of the river, in Manicaland. This is an example of one way in which the quest for slaves and ivory transformed the interior of

East and Central Africa, and throughout the region the pattern was repeated with local variations.

The Makua The Makua, who traded with the Portuguese in Mozambique, and the Yao, who carried their ivory and slaves first to Mozambique and later to Kilwa, were caught in the same web. Until the 1850s the Makua were the main suppliers of slaves to Mozambique Island. Makua slaving activities caused their victims to move away. To procure enough slaves the Makua chiefs now had to raid one another. They were so dependent upon the slave trade that they could not find an alternative means of income. They were captives of the international slave-trading economy; the trading goods that they received in return for slaves had become so much a part of their society that it seemed that they could not do without them. Within two decades the Makua had become so weak and fragmented that it was an easy matter for the Portuguese to take over control.

The Yao If the Makua were captives of the international trading economy, the Yao were no less so. Their widespread trading activities, first in ivory and later in slaves, were made possible because the women tended the crops. In order to ensure that the supply of cloths and guns and beads did not dry up they neglected production and the development of manufacturing industries. With regard to the women tending the crops, Alpers writes that: 'While women were taking the major responsibility for producing the real wealth in their societies – wealth upon which genuine development, however, gradual, could be based – men were beginning to engage themselves in a related set of purely extractive economic activities for the luxury trade in ivory ... Participation in this trade eventually became so important to the Yao that the economic values of their society came to be derived from the wealth and prestige that it brought, rather than from the truly productive aspects of the economy, such as agriculture and manufacturing. Social differentiation and stratification were increased as a result of this trade, although the productive capacity of society was in no way increased, except by the addition of slave labour that was purchased with its profits ... By the end of the nineteenth century the economic values of people like the Yao had been completely distorted so that this sort of trade was considered the only activity worth pursuing. At the same time, the entire course of their economic development had been disastrously skewed and was already on its way towards an underdeveloped state.'⁴

Mwata Yamvo Some other examples taken from Central Africa are even more revealing. As has been indicated, the sudden disintegration of the western Lunda kingdom of the Mwata Yamvo in the 1870s was the result of a build-up of pressures over a longer period of time. The demand for slaves and establishment of long-distance routes had brought prosperity to the empire, and the change in the supply and demand led to its decline. By the 1840s, when the demand for slaves decreased, ivory and rubber resources were already exhausted and they were unable to adapt to changing circumstances. When the Atlantic slave trade went into its final decline, the Mwata Yamvo tried to bolster falling export revenues with wax, ivory and rubber. Slaves were sold to the Luba in the east in return for ivory. But these short-term initiatives were unable to compensate for the loss of export earnings, and the state became a hotbed of dissatisfied factions vying for power as they tried to stem the decline. One of these factions called in Chokwe

mercenaries to support its cause. Chokwe involvement resulted in a temporary restoration of central power, but increasing numbers of Chokwe began to settle in central Lunda, overrunning the kingdom. Thus the central part of the kingdom followed the outer parts which had been disintegrating as a result of pressures from both the east and west.

Luba To the north of the Yeke was the Luba empire. From about the 1780s Luban influence spread rapidly over the region between the Lualaba and Lake Tanganyika, and early in the nineteenth century they conquered the Lualaba lakes and took over the rich fishing and palm oil industries. In the middle of the nineteenth century the Luba empire was at its height and was at the centre of a large and varied trade to both the north and south in articles such as arrow poisons, drums, baskets, iron, palm cloth, fish and zebra skins. But about 1870 the economic and political growth of Luba began to weaken, and the latent potential for internal dissension then came to the fore. A crucial factor in the decline was the exhaustion of ivory supplies. While it had ivory there was no problem, its trading relations with the Nyamwezi-Yeke in the south and the Swahili-Arabs from Ujiji in the north were stable. But when ivory became scarce the Yeke state, which was based on overt military power and exploitation, became a threat to it. Another threat came from the Swahili-Arabs who, by driving northwards into the forest, obtained ivory directly, cutting the Luba off from their northern trading circuit. This decline in Luban fortunes occurred just when it needed outside trade in order to obtain guns to survive. With no ivory it had to turn to trading slaves in return for guns. But slaves were not a high priority among traders at this time, so prices were low. To compensate for the low prices Luba had to increase the number of slaves sold.

The Luban slave trade thus expanded in the 1870s. But this was not so easy to do, as Luba was confined in both the north and the south by strong, well-armed states, which were not open to Luba slave raiding on a large scale. In fact, these states were more likely to use the Luba as a raiding ground of their own. The Luba thus had to obtain the slaves internally, which exacerbated conflicts and tensions and saw a further decline in authority. The result of this crisis was that in the 1870s and 1880s the Luba began to break up into factions. As the empire declined so it increasingly became prey to Yeke and Swahili-Arab slave raids.

EUROPE IN THE EAST AFRICAN INTERIOR

**Limited knowl-
edge** Until the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, East, Northeast and Central Africa were far more inaccessible to Europe than West Africa, and this region also appeared less attractive commercially, so in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it did not receive as much attention as West Africa. Europeans in 1800 knew very little about the Central or East African interior, and there was not much at the coast that attracted their interest either. The Atlantic slave trade was the main concern of abolitionists in England. By comparison the East African slave trade (if they were aware of it) seemed very small.

The Congo basin Europeans also knew little about the Congo basin. Although the Congo River has about 6 500 km of uninterrupted navigable waterways, it is not navigable between the Atlantic Ocean and Stanley Pool (Malebo Pool) at Leopoldville (Kinshasha), a distance of 400 km from the coast. This stretch of the river is broken by cataracts and waterfalls and goods had to be carried from Stanley Pool to the coast. Having to use expensive head portage on this part of the river made it an unattractive proposition for European traders. It was thus not primarily the desire for trade that made Europeans penetrate much of the Central and East African interior, but rather intriguing and unsolved riddles regarding the source of the Nile and the Congo rivers and other geographical puzzles. Continued rumours about huge lakes in the African interior and the existence of the fabulous Mountains of the Moon drew adventurers and geographers to this part of Africa.

Bruce, Krapf and Rebmann James Bruce spent five years travelling in the Sudan and Ethiopia, and the publication in 1790 of his five-volume *Travels to discover the source of the Nile in the years 1768–73* did more than any other previous work to stimulate interest in Africa. It awakened the interest of the German Johan Ludwig Krapf in Africa; he belonged to the Church Missionary Society and between 1848 and 1852, together with fellow missionary Johan Rebmann, made a number of journeys into the interior to search for suitable sites for new mission stations. In the course of one of these trips, on 11 May 1848 Rebmann became the first white man to see the cap of Kibo, the highest of Mount Kilimanjaro's summits. Krapf was rewarded by being the first white man to see Mount Kenya.

Burton and Speke In February 1858 Captain Richard Burton and John Hanning Speke reached Lake Tanganyika. Speke later found his way to Lake Victoria, and on a second journey to Africa in 1860, together with James Grant, he went part of the way round Lake Victoria confirming that it was indeed the source of the Nile.

Livingstone David Livingstone was to do more than anyone else to bring the attention of Europe to the slave trade in the interior of East Africa. He made a number of journeys from his base at Kolobeng in Bechuanaland on the eastern fringe of the Kalahari desert, discovering Lake Ngami in 1849 and travelling as far as the Zambezi in 1851. In the first half of the 1850s, accompanied part of the way by a band of Makololo helpers, he crossed the continent from Luanda to Quilimane, which he reached in May 1856, having been the first white man to see the waterfalls that the Makololo called 'the smoke that thunders' and which he named the Victoria Falls.

When he returned to England he was given a hero's welcome. In 1857 he published the first of his three books, *Missionary travels*. In 1858 he returned to Africa under the aegis of the British government with instructions to explore the Zambezi and its environs. The aim of the expedition was to obtain information about the area and to open the way for the introduction of the three 'Cs' – Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation. Livingstone had come across the devastation caused by the slave trade, and he was convinced that the only way this evil could be combatted was by missionaries and traders opening up Central Africa. The expedition of 1858–1863 found more evidence of the horrors of the slave trade and of the cruelty that accompanied it, and when Livingstone returned to England in 1864 he did much to bring this to the attention of people. His book *The*

Zambezi and its tributaries contained a terrible indictment of the trade in human flesh and aroused widespread concern and indignation in England, where there had hitherto not been much interest or knowledge of what was happening in the East African interior.

In 1866 he set out on his last journey in search of the source of the Nile. He was in an exhausted state when he struggled into Ujiji on the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika, and it was while he was here that he was found by Henry Morton Stanley in November 1871 and greeted with the famous words, 'Dr Livingstone, I presume?' Livingstone died in 1874 near the village of Ilala, close to Lake Bangweulu.

Stanley Born as John Rowlands in Wales in 1841, Stanley joined the *New York Herald* in 1869. When rumours of Livingstone's death reached England, the newspaper decided to send Stanley to Africa to find out whether Livingstone was dead. Stanley made great capital out of his successful quest with his books *Through darkest Africa* and *How I found Livingstone*. Stanley spent four months with Livingstone, during which time he became fired with enthusiasm for the search for the course of the Congo and the source of the Nile. After attending Livingstone's funeral in Westminster Abbey in London in April 1874, he set out for Africa again, and turned his attention to Livingstone's theory that the Lualaba was really the Nile. It was a dreadful journey with the boats having to be dismantled and hauled overland whenever they came to one of the many stretches of unnavigable water, all the while having to ward off attacks by hostile tribesmen and cope with smallpox, dysentery and typhoid fever. Since the river took them in a northwesterly direction it became clear that it was not the Nile, but the Congo River.

Stanley directed his attention to the commercial possibilities of opening up Africa, which he thought were excellent, for beyond Stanley Pool the river was navigable as far as Stanleyville. But he could not interest the British in his schemes to open up the Congo basin to European penetration. By the 1870s British traders between Angola and Cameroon had built up a substantial trade that rivalled the trade on the Oil Rivers. By remaining on the coast and buying the ivory and other articles that were brought to them, they were flourishing and certainly did not see any need to extend their activities into the interior. Stanley's appeals for the opening up of the Congo basin therefore did not strike a responsive chord.

But Stanley's plans were seized upon by King Leopold of Belgium. For a long time he had been interested in the Congo basin, and now that Stanley had demonstrated the possibilities he was ready to act. When Stanley returned to Africa in 1878 he did so at Leopold's request. In 1876 Leopold had been the moving spirit behind the establishment of the International African Association, whose aims were ostensibly to bring enlightenment and civilisation to Africa. The various committees of the African Association operated separately in each country, and it was as the representative of the Belgian branch of this association that Stanley returned to the Congo. To Leopold the African association was merely a mask behind which to conceal his real intentions, and these were to create a personal empire in the heart of Africa. The tale of how he did so forms part of the partitioning of the continent.

Opening of Africa to European influence The journeys of Livingstone and Stanley contributed greatly to the opening up of Africa to European influence. They focused world attention on Central and East Africa, particularly on the slave trade. Livingstone had travelled the Swahili-Arab route from Zanzibar to Ujiji, and he had seen it littered with the bones of those who had fallen by the wayside during the 1 300-km march from Ujiji to the coast. He brought home to millions of Europeans the human misery of refugees living in fear of the armed bands of slave raiders who might sweep down at any moment. He saw too that the slave and ivory trade went hand in hand, that slaves were used to carry the ivory to the coast, where both slaves and tusks were then disposed of at a profit. Livingstone believed that the introduction of legitimate trade would destroy the slave trade. Africa must be opened up to Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation.

Mission stations Before the partitioning of Africa the main European activity in East Central Africa was the Christian mission. There had been mission stations here before Livingstone's journeys but his accounts of the slave trade in the interior gave great impetus to mission activity. In 1859 the London Missionary Society to which Livingstone belonged established a station at Inyati in Matabeleland. Livingstone was directly responsible for the Universities' Mission to Central Africa sending Charles Frederick Mackenzie and eight missionaries to the Shire highlands in 1861 to an area that was constantly being invaded by Yao slave raiders. Mackenzie used his rifle to ward off the attackers. Fever took a heavy toll of the missionaries, and Mackenzie himself succumbed in 1862. In 1863 the mission withdrew to Zanzibar.

In 1868 the Roman Catholic Holy Ghost Fathers started working at Bagamoyo on the coast among freed slaves. The Church Missionary Society established a station at Mombasa in 1875. In the same year the Free Church of Scotland and the Foreign Mission of the Established Church of Scotland started a mission at the southern end of Lake Nyasa at Cape Maclear. The name of the station was Livingstonia, a clear indication of the inspiration for the settlement. E. D. Young and James Stewart of Lovedale fame were in charge of the station for a brief spell before Dr Robert Laws, a medical missionary, took over. Dr Laws's surgery won the respect of the surrounding people and within a short space of time the first school was started. The demand for Dr Laws's medical skills was matched by the demand for the calico cloth that the missionaries brought with them, and Laws soon found himself spending most of his time trading. His plea for traders to come and release him from this activity resulted in the launching in June 1878 of the Livingstonia Central Africa Company by the Moir brothers, John and Frederick. In 1881 the missionaries moved to the west of Lake Nyasa, to Bandawe, a more populous area. Although the local people were constantly threatened by the Ngoni, Laws refused to lead them in battle against the Ngoni or to harbour a refugee slave even for one night.

Other missions were not so successful in avoiding entanglements. One of the problems facing missions in the troubled area south of Lake Nyasa was that slaves and other refugees flocked to the stations for protection. Henry Henderson, who had been the sole representative of the Church of Scotland at the Livingstonia mission, in 1876 established a station in the Shire highlands in the area where Mackenzie had operated. It was

named Blantyre after Livingstone's birthplace. There was no clergyman, only a doctor and a small group of artisans. The Moir brothers had no agent in Blantyre but kept supplies in one of the mission's rooms and the missionaries found themselves engaged in much trading and checking of stores. The Reverend Duff Macdonald eventually arrived as minister at Blantyre, but he was not the right man for the post. He soon became totally involved in the affairs of the fugitive slaves who established villages in the neighbourhood of the mission station, playing the role of chief, trying and flogging those found guilty of theft. It was not long before the inevitable happened and he tried and executed a man found guilty of murder. When the mission at home heard about this, they recalled almost the entire staff and the Blantyre mission had virtually to be re-founded.

The Universities' Mission to Central Africa returned to the Nyasa area in 1876 and soon had a number of stations east and west of the lake. From 1878 the London Missionary Society established itself around Lake Tanganyika. The White Fathers was a Catholic order founded in 1868 by the Frenchman Cardinal Lavigerie, who in the late 1880s played a prominent role in whipping up flagging European interest in fighting the slave trade. They set up a station at Ujiji in 1879 and within a few years had started a chain of stations from Lake Tanganyika to Lake Victoria further south.

The greatest missionary impact was made in Buganda, further north. The kabaka Mutesa studied Islam, but when he perceived a threat to his political domain he saw the Christian missionaries as a way of preserving his independence. He asked Stanley to let Europe know he was ready to welcome Christian missionaries. Stanley's letter of appeal published in England in 1875 found a ready response, and by 1878 there were five Church Missionary Society missionaries in Buganda. By 1880 the White Fathers were also active there.

In 1856 there had been only one missionary on the mainland; by the early 1880s there were over 100 European missionaries in East Africa. Missionaries and explorers were not the only Europeans who found their way to East Central Africa in these years. There were other traders besides the Moir brothers, whose company was later renamed the African Lakes Company. Rumours of gold in the interior and the discovery of Great Zimbabwe by Karl Mauch in 1871 focused attention on the area. Prospectors, hunters, traders and adventurers all made their way there, but by the mid-1870s their numbers were still small, and a contemporary estimate was that only about 20 trading wagons a year came into Matabeleland. In the Lake Nyasa neighbourhood in the late 1880s there were only about 70 Europeans. Compared with West Africa, by 1880 the presence of Europeans and of European interests in East and Central Africa was small.

THE END OF THE SLAVE TRADE

**Colo-
nial re-
bellion**

The partitioning of Africa by the Europeans will be discussed from chapter 6 onwards, but it is necessary to anticipate events a little in order to round off the campaign against the slave trade in this part of Africa. Britain's policy of controlling East Africa indirectly via the sultan of Zanzibar failed in 1885 when Germany established the colony of

German East Africa, later known as Tanganyika. It was not long before tactless German behaviour and the harsh practices of the German Colonisation Society, which set up the German East Africa Company, resulted in a major revolt at the end of 1888. Bismarck required a demonstration of Anglo-German solidarity and in order to obtain British support he blamed the Arab slave dealers for the rebellion. Salisbury was reluctant to become involved, but he was afraid that if he did not there was a danger that Germany would intervene in Zanzibar. So he presented the measure to the public as a step to combat the slave trade.

**British
postal
subsidy**

The slave trade had often been used as a mask for the promotion of other interests. When the government subsidy for the British India Steam Navigation Company came up for renewal in 1882, the Post Office expressed the view that the service had little postal value and was not worth the £10 000 subsidy. But the Foreign Office insisted that the subsidy be renewed, not because of the post, nor even because of the slave trade, but to keep the trade that accompanied the mail service in British hands. They were afraid that without this British service the French not only would make inroads in British trading spheres but would also erode British political influence. The renewal of the subsidy was presented to parliament as a measure to combat the slave trade by encouraging the growth of legitimate trade, but the real reason was to counter French commercial and political expansion. 'One is left,' writes Suzanne Miers, 'with the impression that, while the suppression of the slave trade was undoubtedly desired by vocal sections of the British public and was a clear British objective, those whose job it was to defend British interests abroad did not let humanitarian questions dictate their policy. They were happy, however, to present that policy to the world in an anti-slavery guise.'⁵

**The
French
flag**

Now, in 1888, Salisbury felt it politic for Britain's wider interests to support Bismarck's call for a blockade of the coast, and he saw in this an opportunity of hitting at the slave trade and limiting the growth of French influence in the region. British anti-slavery cruisers along the coast had very little effect because an increasing number of slave runners used the French flag; as France extended its colonial possessions to the Red Sea littoral, Madagascar and the Comoro Islands, more people became entitled to use that flag. France's desire to build up its trade in the region made it unwilling to inquire too closely into the credentials of those who flew the French emblem on their dhows. Because the French would not allow British cruisers to search French ships for slaves, Arab dhows flying the Tricolor could pass British ships without fear of interception. What made the position of the cruisers even more difficult was that as more of the African coastline came under European control, their freedom of action was further circumscribed since British ships could not search vessels in the territorial waters of other powers such as Germany.

**Naval
blockade**

The blockade that was set up along the whole coast in November 1888 greatly alarmed France, who was concerned that Britain might interfere in Madagascar under the pretext of fighting the slave trade. The French now became more careful about whom they allowed to make use of their flag and they also increased the number of their own ships doing patrol duty and apprehending slavers. The sultan, who was losing revenue

through the stopping of trade, wanted the blockade to end, and the British put pressure on him to issue a decree to the effect that all slaves entering his domains after 1 November 1889 would be free. By now Bismarck was also keen to end the blockade, and it was lifted on 1 October 1889. The blockade thus had a good effect in helping to clamp down on the slave trade, although for some time afterwards the sultan's subjects simply ignored the anti-slavery decree.

**Leo-
pold
and the
arms
ban**

During the blockade the Germans had been more interested in preventing arms from reaching the rebels than they had been in fighting the slave trade. King Leopold of Belgium, whose personal control of the Congo Free State had been recognised internationally at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, was keen to extend the borders of his new state, and in the east he cast covetous eyes on the sphere of influence built up by Tippu Tip. Leopold cooperated with Bismarck in trying to stop the arms trade but he had his own agenda, which was to gain as much control as possible over Tippu Tip. He therefore confiscated consignments of arms destined for Tippu Tip and banned the sale of arms and ammunition on the upper river and its tributaries. Leopold represented these measures as steps to combat the slave trade. He also represented the war that broke out between the Arabs and the Free State in 1892 in the same terms, but his real aim was to expand eastwards.

**The
arms
trade**

In 1889 Bismarck approached Salisbury with a view to obtaining an international agreement to control the trade in arms. But Salisbury was not keen. This was a tricky problem, which had been avoided at the Berlin Conference, the first international conference to deal exclusively with African affairs. The arms trade was a totally different proposition from the liquor trade. As Miers writes of Berlin: 'In attempting to restrict the spirits trade, Granville had clear evidence that the temperance movement was behind him and he knew that no important British industrial interests were at stake. The arms traffic, on the other hand, consisted largely of British manufactures and only the humanitarians attacked it. Granville took no steps to raise the matter in Berlin. Other powers also showed no interest in the question.'⁶ Besides liquor, guns were a staple of trade on the Niger River and chiefs demanded guns as 'dash' before giving permission to trade. Merchants regarded the trade in munitions as important as it attracted other trade as well. It was also a complicated moral issue because to stop the trade encouraged smugglers who sold guns to slave raiders. The supply of guns enabled people to protect themselves against slavers. In 1889, in the Nyasa area where there was war with the Arabs, Mlozi and his supporters were already well armed. To stop the trade in arms would be to the disadvantage of Mlozi's victims. Mlozi's possession of arms and the absence of arms among the surrounding peoples had enabled Mlozi to terrorise the neighbourhood. In addition, Rhodes's agent had promised Lobengula 1 000 guns, and the British government was busy talking to Rhodes about granting his British South Africa Company a charter, so it did not seem to be a good time to take action against the arms trade.

**Brussels
Con-
ference:
1890**

A better opportunity of doing something positive about the arms trade arose with the convening of the Brussels Conference in 1890. This was called to discuss the slave trade in Africa; a secondary aim was the restriction of the arms and liquor traffic. Cardinal

Lavigerie of the White Fathers, which had missions around Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika, toured Europe between 1888 and 1890 calling for a Christian crusade and whipping up public opinion against the East African slave trade. He did not say anything new, but he revived flagging public interest in the question of slavery. But although the objectives of the conference were humanitarian, humanity played a minor role in the way in which the issues were handled. The major powers used the conference to feather their own nests, and although the 17 powers represented at Brussels agreed to fight the slave trade and to prevent the importation of firearms and hard liquor, the clauses were largely evaded. The contribution of the Brussels Act was not so much in combating the slave, liquor and firearms trade, but in the formulation of the idea of trusteeship.

**Ban-
ning
the
slave
trade:
Berlin**

At the Berlin Conference Britain proposed that the traffic in slaves be declared a crime against the Law of Nations. There was not enough support to pass the measure, but the slave trade was condemned. Article VI of the Berlin Act read as follows: 'All the Powers exercising sovereign rights or influence in the aforesaid territory bind themselves to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of their moral and material well-being, and to help in suppressing slavery, and especially the slave trade.' But no plan for common action was formulated, no practical measures were taken to see that this was adhered to – the powers were not committed to any specific action. The pushing by Britain of the anti-slavery proposals at Berlin was in part a gesture to the humanitarian and philanthropic movements in Britain. But even if the powers had no intention of taking action to stamp out slavery and the slave trade, at least they acknowledged that they had a duty to do so. So in many ways this was the first small step on the way towards the idea of trusteeship that was later to feature more prominently.

Brussels At Brussels this was taken a step further. The statesmen in Brussels in 1890 used the anti-slavery movement to further their own ends, but as Suzanne Miers writes, 'they were forced to pay at least lip service to a high ideal. The Act largely failed both as an instrument for the promotion of "native welfare" and as an experiment in international co-operation. Nevertheless the ideal had been voiced and the responsibility accepted, and the principles embodied in it were adopted by the League of Nations and eventually passed to the United Nations. They were principles above the sordid and selfish aspirations of individual powers.'⁷

The legal status of slavery on Zanzibar and the other islands was eventually ended on 5 April 1897. Slavery was abolished in the sultan's mainland dominions only in 1907; this abolition did not include German East Africa, where slavery as an institution was abolished only in 1922. At Brussels the French had agreed to take measures about who was entitled to use their flag, and in 1905 the Court of Arbitration at the Hague ruled that, by signing at Brussels, France had in effect agreed to limit the use of her flag where 'native vessels' were concerned.

British motives As we have seen, other nations charged that Britain's anti-slavery patrols gave it a convenient excuse for interfering with indigenous rulers, and that they were used to support British traders. Both France and Portugal believed that British sponsorship of the anti-slavery campaign was a cloak, that it was merely an excuse to harry the trade of rivals and promote British interests.

There is an element of truth in this and naval ships were undoubtedly used to keep a close watch on the activities of rivals. But we should not take too cynical a view of the British campaign. Britain frequently took steps against the slave trade when it would have preferred not to, and British merchants were sometimes hamstrung in their operations because of government action against this trade. Britain did not sustain the campaign on the same level all the time. It had high points and low points. It was usually a secondary consideration and the amount of funds available was limited.

As far as the British public were concerned, it was a cause for which they were prepared to see money and men expended. They supported the campaign even in those parts of Africa where Britain did not have major interests. But because the public were prepared to see funds going towards combating the slave trade, all sorts and conditions of interested parties raised support for their own interests by clothing their wants in an anti-slavery guise. Salisbury was adept at putting an anti-slavery mask on a wide variety of projects in order to raise money from parliament or to justify a particular line of action. Of course this does not mean that a man such as Sir John Kirk was not really interested in fighting the slave trade – he was very much concerned with it, but he was not averse to advancing British political interests and expansion at the same time as he was striking a blow at the trade in human beings.

Suzanne Miers, who takes a very close and canny look at the motives behind the campaign, writes that 'it is perhaps fair to suggest that Britain remained faithful to the anti-slavery cause and made certain sacrifices to further it but that she did not sacrifice any important national interest and she sometimes used it for other than humanitarian purposes. But when all is said and done she did more than any other power.'⁸

Notes

- 1 S. Miers, *Britain and the ending of the slave trade*, p. 94.
- 2 R. Oliver, 'Introduction', in R. Oliver & G. N. Sanderson (eds), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 6, *From 1870 to 1905*, p. 3.
- 3 D. Birmingham, *Central Africa to 1870: Zambezia, Zaïre and the South Atlantic*, p. 124.
- 4 E. A. Alpers, *Ivory and slaves in East Central Africa*, pp. 30–31.
- 5 Miers, *Britain and the ending of the slave trade*, p. 35.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 187.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 319.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 317.



Modernisation, debt and trade in North Africa (c. 1800–1880)

Soon after the discovery of the New World at the end of the fifteenth century, Europe made its presence felt on the West African coast, and the Atlantic slave trade drew West Africa increasingly into relationships with Europe. In East Africa the Arabian and Indian Ocean trading system impinged itself on the coast, and the growing demand for ivory and slaves brought this part of the world into the international trading economy. The countries of North Africa, because of their geographical position relative to Europe and the Mediterranean world as well as the composition of their populations, differed markedly from both West and East Africa and their integration into the world economy took an entirely different path.

Strategic importance of North Africa

Slaves were also sold in North African ports, and British interest in combating this trade was also a factor in the attention given by Britain to North Africa. But what made North Africa so very different from either West or East Africa, was its strategic importance to Europe. Another major difference was that, with the exception of Morocco, the countries of North Africa at the start of the nineteenth century were all nominally under the suzerainty of the Ottoman sultan. They were all keen to keep the Turks from interfering with them and to win more independence from these overlords. In order to do so they



welcomed European interest and involvement in their countries as a counterbalance to the threat of Ottoman control.

**Mod-
ernisa-
tion**

There was another reason for the welcome they gave Europe, and that was the desire to modernise. They needed European know-how, and above all, European capital in their attempts to modernise their countries. When they first encouraged European initiatives they could not see the end result of such encouragement, which was the limiting of their independence in a way that was far more restrictive than any Turkish overrule. These are common features of North Africa in the first three quarters of the century, and not even Morocco, which consciously tried to discourage rather than encourage European involvement, succeeded in escaping from the growing hold of Europe on North Africa. In this chapter the emphasis will be placed on the attempts of these North African polities to modernise, and how this brought them into the European orbit in a way that had not happened either in West or in East Africa.

EGYPT AND THE SUDAN

**Moham-
med Ali**

Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 and the short French occupation marked a turning point not only for Egypt but for the whole of North Africa. It showed how weak the Muslim world was in relation to Christian Europe, and how powerless the Ottoman sultan was to protect this part of his empire. When the French left in 1801, Egypt again came under the sway of the Ottoman Turks, but the Mamluks who had previously exercised power had been dealt such a severe military blow by the French that they were unable to reassert undisputed authority. An internal struggle broke out in which Mohammed Ali triumphed. Mohammed Ali had come to Egypt with an Albanian contingent which was part of the Ottoman army that had been raised to drive the French out of Egypt. In 1805 the Ottoman sultan recognised him as pasha (viceroy) of Egypt. So it was an external factor, the French occupation of the country, that brought Mohammed Ali to Egypt, and the weakening of the power of the Mamluks that gave him the opportunity of taking advantage of the internal struggle. The French occupation marked the end of Egyptian isolation and the country increasingly became the strategic and diplomatic centre of the Middle East.

Reforms

Although Mohammed Ali is known as a great reformer and has been called the 'founder of modern Egypt', his aim was not to improve the lot of the Egyptian people, and during his rule the downtrodden and suppressed peasant fellahin suffered greatly. What he wanted to do was to establish a dynasty. His objectives were personal. He wanted to render Egypt so powerful that it would be independent of the Ottomans except in name. In order to do so he implemented drastic reforms. He broke the power of the big landowners by nationalising all of the land. The corrupt tax-farming system of the Mamluks was high on his list of priorities for reform. When this was abolished, taxes were paid directly to the state, usually in the form of wheat and cotton, which was sold by the state in Europe. The Egyptian economy was integrated into the international economic system through the contracting of loans and the production of cotton. Mohammed Ali did much to stimulate cotton growing and by 1845, 400 per cent more cotton was being grown than in 1821. In the course of this the Egyptian economy was

transformed from a subsistence economy to a cash crop economy. Because Europe showed such an interest in cotton, other agricultural activities were neglected in order to satisfy the European demand. The heavy reliance on cotton, encouraged by Europe, demonstrates the significance of the influence of Europe and the pull of world markets.

Mohammed Ali brought in French advisers and technicians to modernise the cotton industry and introduce superior agricultural techniques, all with the primary aim of increasing the flow of revenue to the state. Although Mohammed Ali realised that he could not modernise Egypt without calling upon Europeans for financial backing and know-how (European influence and presence in Egypt increased enormously during his reign), he was careful not to allow Europeans free rein, and he refused permission for the construction of a canal linking the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea, fearing that the existence of such a canal would strengthen the Europeans in Egypt at the expense of his own position.

Industrial expansion	Communications and transport were improved. He did much for education and many promising young Egyptians were sent abroad to further their studies. Industrial production was stimulated by the building of wool and flax mills, a large silk factory, and other factories for the production of paper and indigo. His industrial initiatives extended to glassworks, sugar refineries and a tannery. Unfortunately for the Egyptians, this promising start could not be fully sustained, for when the industrial revolution transformed Europe, Egypt, which did not have supplies of coal and iron to drive industrial machinery, was unable to join the ranks of the industrialising nations.
Defence	Mohammed built up an efficient and modern army that provided the basis for the stability which allowed him to attend to reform and to see that his programme was carried through. Between 1818 and 1830 he established munitions and ordnance factories. Although he did use fellahin in the army, he did not want to depend too much on them, and the Sudan became an important recruiting ground. A camp for recruits was set up at Aswan and his army commanders captured Sudanese in armed slave raids and forced them into the army.
Trade routes	He helped to revitalise a number of trade routes. The Wahabis of the Hejaz, the coastal plain of Saudi Arabia which included the City of God, Mecca, and the City of the Prophet, Medina, had ruined the trade in that direction by their interference with the annual pilgrimage caravans to these two cities. Mohammed took action against the Wahabis and trade between Egypt and the Hejaz flourished. Pilgrims could once more travel to the Muslim holy places, and this traffic gave a boost to merchants in Cairo. Trade routes to Ethiopia were also revived, with important results for the rulers in the north of Ethiopia who in the 1830s and 1840s were able to supply their armies with firearms purchased with the profits of trade.
Foreign affairs	From 1819 Mohammed Ali monopolised the export of most of Egypt's products. This monopoly was later extended to the Sudan, which Mohammed invaded and made an Egyptian colony in 1821. By the time that Mohammed invaded the Sudan he was already stronger than his overlord, the Ottoman sultan, and in 1821, when the sultan's Greek subjects revolted in an attempt to throw off the Turkish yoke, Mohammed went

to the aid of the sultan. The Egyptian intervention was so successful that it seemed likely that the Greek revolt would be crushed. In the face of Russian threats to intervene on the side of the Greek Christians, Britain and France sent a naval force to Greece in the hope of obtaining an armistice between the rebels and the Egyptians. Their efforts to achieve this were unsuccessful, and the Turkish and Egyptian fleets were destroyed in Navarino Bay in 1827. Mohammed expected generous compensation from the Ottoman sultan for his aid, and when this was not forthcoming, he wrung concessions from the reluctant sultan who was forced to recognise him as governor of Syria and Palestine after Mohammed's spectacular invasion of Ottoman Syria in October 1831. Mohammed Ali's defeat of an Ottoman army sent to drive him from Syria in 1839, alarmed Britain who was committed to shoring up the tottering Ottoman empire as a counterbalance to Russian influence. Under pressure from Europe Mohammed withdrew in 1840. This represented a major defeat for him.

Declining power European merchants in both Egypt and the Sudan had long been resentful of the monopolies established by Mohammed Ali, but there was little they could do about it while Mohammed's power was growing. Now that his power was declining, however, they moved to obtain control over his economic policy. The first step in this direction, granted after pressure from Europe, was to lift restrictions on foreign traders.

Mohammed's successors: Abbas Mohammed Ali's successors were fairly unmemorable rulers. During the latter years of Mohammed's rule, the Egyptian economy was becoming increasingly integrated into the world economy, and the process accelerated as the century progressed. The abolition of state monopolies forced on Mohammed by Europe undermined Egypt's precarious finances. In 1851 Abbas signed a contract for the construction of a railway line between Alexandria and Cairo. This was completed in 1856, extended to Suez in 1858 and later built up the Nile valley to Aswan. Abbas had left major debts, and the situation became worse under Said. An important milestone in this process occurred in 1856 when Said gave the Frenchman Ferdinand de Lesseps a concession to build what became the Suez Canal.

Ismail's improvements In 1863 Mohammed Ali's grandson Ismail took over the reins of power. He extended the advanced educational institutions established by his grandfather, and many intellectuals persecuted by the Ottomans gravitated to Egypt, which became a major centre for thinkers and writers; there was an intellectual dynamism which provided a fertile climate for the development of political ideas. Like his grandfather he was a great moderniser and he embarked on a series of schemes that included the building of 430 bridges, the digging of some 112 canals extending over 13 500 km, the construction of 150 km of railway line and the erection of 2 500 km of telegraph lines in Egypt and another 2 000 km in the Sudan. A modern harbour was created at Alexandria and it became the best port in the Mediterranean. Cairo was virtually rebuilt, being modelled on the lines of Paris. Sewers were introduced, and the supply of fresh water and lighting improved markedly.

Debt Ismail obtained concessions from the Ottoman sultan which provided for the new title of khedive and hereditary succession to the throne of Egypt from father to son. He had

to pay dearly for these concessions, which added to his considerable debt. In order to pay for his numerous schemes he had to borrow money at high rates of interest. The Suez Canal was opened in 1869 and the lavish entertaining that accompanied this event added to the huge and growing debt. As Egypt became more modern it came increasingly into the debt of Europe.

Early on in Ismail's reign the financial situation did not look too bad, and good prices were being received abroad for cotton, especially during the American Civil War (1861–1865). At the end of the war the market collapsed and Egypt's financial situation became desperate. By 1876 Ismail's debts were close to £100 million; about two thirds of this being foreign loans.

**Capitu-
lations**

European firms lent money to Egypt and extracted a variety of concessions from the Egyptian government. They found a group of British parliamentarians willing to apply pressure on their behalf to ensure that they received special treatment. The ability of the Egyptian government to act freely was being restricted all the time. To give an example: in terms of the so-called Capitulations, Europeans living in Egypt were virtually a law unto themselves, and were largely exempt from the khedive's jurisdiction. Europeans could not be forced to pay taxes, nor could the Egyptian authorities arrest a European unless his consul had specifically given his consent, and even then a European could insist on being tried in a consular court and not in an Egyptian court. This severely restricted the freedom of action of the Egyptian authorities, as by 1880 there were some 80 000 Europeans in Egypt, more than in any other part of Africa, except for the Cape Colony and Algeria. They were drawn mostly from Italy, Greece and Malta.

**Suez
Canal**

As Mohammed Ali had foreseen when he refused permission for its construction, the Suez Canal greatly increased the potential for European intervention in the country. Of all the European powers, Britain benefited most from the the construction of the canal as it made the route to its wealthy Indian colonial empire much shorter. Soon 80 per cent of British trade with the East passed through this vital waterway and it became important to Britain to ensure that the canal did not fall into the hands of a potentially hostile power that could cut off Britain's lifeline to India. Britain's interest in Egypt suddenly assumed new proportions. One should not make too much of this, however. In *Africa and the Victorians*, published in 1961, Robinson and Gallagher put forward the view that the entire British position in Africa was determined by the strategic need to defend Egypt and the canal, and that in order to retain this control it was prepared to make sacrifices elsewhere, in West Africa, for example.¹ Research since then has tended to modify this position. The security of the canal depended not so much on controlling Egypt as on supremacy at sea, and here no other power could challenge Britain. Although there is no doubt that Egypt was of strategic value because of the Suez Canal, it is clear that considerable British investments, both public and private, made Egypt important to Britain apart from any strategic value. From the 1840s Egypt's external trade increased rapidly and so did Britain's share of it. In 1880, 80 per cent of Egypt's exports went to Britain, while 44 per cent of its imports came from Britain. The exports were largely raw cotton while manufactured cotton goods from Manchester figured heavily in the imports. In the second half of the nineteenth century the investment of

the financial and service sector came strongly to the fore. This was part of a general spurt in overseas lending after 1850 as magnates and middle-class investors put their money in foreign projects in the hope of making superior returns. So we should not see British interest in Egypt purely, or even mainly, in terms of the defence of the road to the East.

Financial disaster

The khedive's financial difficulties provided the British prime minister, Benjamin Disraeli, with the opportunity of obtaining a share in the Suez Canal and in 1875 he bought up the khedive's shares in the canal for £4 million. But even this large amount could not stave off impending financial disaster and in 1876 Ismail was forced to acknowledge that Egypt could not meet its financial obligations. An international body, the Commission of Public Debt (*caisse de la dette publique*), came into being with commissioners nominated by the governments of the English, French, Russian, German, Austrian and Italian investors who had lent Ismail money. The commissioners soon discovered that they lacked the authority to force acceptance of financial reforms, and as a result of European pressure in 1877 Ismail was persuaded to appoint an Englishman and a Frenchman to control Egyptian finances. In terms of this Dual Control Egypt lost her ability to act independently.

British occupation

The Dual Control caused much dissatisfaction in Egypt, and pressure groups in Egypt forced Ismail to dismiss his financial advisers, whereupon Britain and France turned to Turkey, insisting that the Ottoman sultan dismiss Ismail. The Turks consented and Ismail's son Tewfik replaced him. Drastic reforms followed with the aim of making Egypt solvent. The harsh measures aroused widespread discontent. Army officers were particularly badly hit by the reforms and many of them were reduced to half pay. A series of military protests erupted from February 1879. By February 1882 Urabi Pasha, an army officer, was the leading political figure in Egypt and had control over much of the country. Britain and France were not prepared to allow the direction of affairs in Egypt to slip out of their hands, and took steps which culminated in the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, an event which was to have a major impact on the partition of Africa and on Anglo-French relations in the last 20 years of the nineteenth century. Since the 1882 occupation of Egypt forms an integral part of the partition of Africa, it will be discussed in chapter 7.

THE MAGHRIB AND THE SAHARA DESERT

Peoples of the area

Northwest Africa comprises the four modern states of the Maghrib (the Maghrib, an Arabic term meaning the 'west', includes the modern states of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco) and also the vast expanse of the Sahara desert which makes up 90 per cent of the region. Despite the two waves of Arab immigration discussed earlier, the majority of the people in this region are not Arab, but descendants of the original Berber stock. With the exception of Morocco the Ottoman Turks had taken over the entire area in the sixteenth century. The presence of foreigners on the coast was growing, and there was a sizeable Jewish population, particularly in Tunisia. By 1836 there were some 12 000 people of European extraction in Tunis. Most of them came from Malta and Sicily. There were not so many Europeans in Algeria or Morocco in the 1830s, and they could

be counted in hundreds rather than thousands. In Morocco there was, however, a very large indigenous Jewish population and in the 1870s Jews comprised about one third of the population of Mogador. Most of the trans-Saharan commerce was in their hands. In Tripoli most of the merchant houses were owned by Jews, who came mostly from Italy.

The Maghrib



Piracy There was an east–west and west–east trade along the littoral, and this included the organisation of pilgrimages to Mecca. For many years pirates based in these coastal towns had preyed on European shipping, and the ‘pirate industry’ in Tunis was extensive and very well organised. Algiers was also infamous for its pirates. But in the early nineteenth century the heyday of the pirates was about to end. As more European-based ships found their way to the North African coast, they were able to act in concert against pirates and to bring superior weapons to bear. Some dramatic blockades of towns like Algiers by combined European and American ships disrupted piracy, which went into a rapid decline. In some areas the demise of piracy brought about real economic hardship, although recent research has tended to show that piracy was usually a marginal activity rather than a major venture upon which the livelihood of many people depended. Of course the European campaign against privateering was designed not merely to stop pirates, but also to increase European influence in Africa. North African towns such as Algiers and Tunis were frequently bombarded and pressurised into making concessions that went beyond the mere cessation of privateering.

The steamship

Piracy was no longer the threat it had once been by the time that the steamship made its appearance in mid-century and revolutionised sea transport. The impact of the steamship on West African trade has been discussed. Although there were significant

differences in the way that the steamship affected North Africa, its impact was substantial. Steamships were bigger and could carry more than sailing ships. In military terms they could convey soldiers to trouble spots more easily; in trading terms they could transport heavier and less valuable products and still make a profit. The potential for trade was thus immeasurably increased.

Strategic importance of Mediterranean As the century progressed it became easier for Europe to reach North Africa, but there were other reasons why Europe was showing more interest in the region. Britain was interested in the relatively small but steady stream of slaves that were transported from North African ports to Turkey and Syria. For both Britain and France the Mediterranean became progressively of greater strategic significance. France was intent on making the most of her proximity to the North African coast to develop trade links, while Britain was intent on preventing Russia from becoming a Mediterranean power and therefore threatening British trade with the East. In this respect the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 invested the Mediterranean with a fresh significance.

The countries of the Maghrib were generally poor, and suffered from periodic droughts such as the drought of 1815 and the following years. There were also some major epidemics such as those of 1784, 1793 and 1817–1818, in which many people died. In the early nineteenth century, it would seem as if the population on the whole was declining. The growing number of Europeans who began appearing on the coast were welcomed by the rulers of these states. As in Egypt, they were keen to modernise their countries and could do so only with European expertise and capital. There was also a deeper reason for seeking closer ties with Europe – they hoped to win more freedom from their Ottoman rulers, and Europeans were seen as allies in this struggle. Morocco was the only North African state that was not part of the Ottoman empire, and its early reaction to increased European activity was to shut itself off from the outside world and to keep contact with Christians to a minimum.

Algeria

French annexation In Algeria there was no question of local rulers welcoming Europeans as a counterweight to the Ottoman sultan. Algeria became a French colony as a result of an invasion by French troops. Disagreement between the French government and the Algerian dey about payment for food supplied by Algeria to the French army during the Napoleonic wars led eventually to dey Hussein losing his temper and slapping the consul, Peirre Duval, in the face with his flywhisk. This challenge to French honour suited Charles X, as at the time he was looking for a foreign adventure to divert attention from his misgovernment at home. Without giving much thought to the long-term effects of invading Algeria, 37 000 soldiers were sent to Algeria in May 1830 ostensibly to stamp out piracy and defend French honour. Hussein was banned and Algeria was annexed. The town of Algiers and the surrounding coastal area were quickly brought under control. There are historians who place at least some of the blame for this loss of independence on the dey. Engaging in behaviour that seemed likely to embroil the country in war with France, without first building up the army, seemed foolhardy in the extreme. N. Ivanov writes that the dey, 'having done everything to embitter rela-

tions with France, did nothing to strengthen the country's defences. In the eyes of Algerian patriots, this was tantamount to treason and pointed to the corruption of the regime.²

**Plans
for Al-
geria**

French politicians had no long-term plans for Algeria. The people of Marseilles were enthusiastic about it as they were well situated to take advantage of the trade and shipping possibilities, but the rest of the French people were initially not very interested. However, a vague belief came to take root that Algeria would somehow reflect French greatness and that it would become for France what India was for Britain. Therefore, no matter how much later French governments would have liked to withdraw, they could not do so without being accused of betraying French interests, and equally important, if not more so, French honour.

**Alge-
rian re-
action
to an-
nexa-
tion**

It is not easy to characterise the reaction of the Algerian people to the French invasion, because there were so many different interest groups and opposing factions in the country. Thus the townsmen had different ideas from the people in the rural areas, those who lived in the mountains felt differently about it than those who inhabited the plains, some people were of Arab stock, others were Berber. With such great differences there was no single reaction. In general one can say that the townsmen showed no great opposition. Many of them welcomed French protection against Abd al-Qadir and his followers who frequently swept down from the mountains to raid them.

**Abd al-
Qadir**

But it was a different matter in the countryside. In 1832 Abd al-Qadir declared a jihad against the French. He succeeded in forming a loose and temporary alliance of the quarrelsome tribes of western and central Algeria who were normally at loggerheads with one another, and the French suffered a number of serious reverses. As undisputed leader over western Algeria, in 1837 he signed the Treaty of Tafna with General Bugeaud, commander of the French forces in Algeria. The French hoped to use Abd al-Qadir to rule the interior, so that they could confine their direct rule to the coastal region. They therefore acknowledged his authority in the interior in return for his recognition of the French occupation of the coastal regions. But a breakdown in their relationship towards the end of 1840 ruined French hopes of a limited occupation, and in 1841 Bugeaud began the task of systematic conquest. The campaign was a very brutal one and left a bitter legacy of hatred. Abd al-Qadir was captured in 1847, but it was another ten years before the Berbers of the interior could be subdued, and even after that the peace did not last long. In 1873 another rebellion broke out and was put down only with the loss of many lives and much bloodshed. It is estimated that in subjugating Algeria, France lost over 150 000 soldiers.

Colons

Settlers from France and other parts of Europe were encouraged to settle in Algeria with offers of land in the fertile coastal area. These immigrants or colons were established in areas where the army could protect them, for the hatred and animosity that the conquest of Algeria aroused precluded the possibility of peaceful settlement. Forced removals of Algerians were undertaken to make more land available for colons. Many of the first settlers were people without means – and included wine growers from the south of France who had given up farming because of disease in their vineyards. Most

of the Europeans in the town were not Frenchmen at all, but Spaniards, Italians and Maltese. By the late 1870s out of a total population of 3 million there were 300 000 Europeans in the country. Many of the small farmers were unable to make a living from farming and drifted to the towns. The land they vacated came into the hands of a few wealthy men and companies who formed them into huge estates. Because of the relatively short distance that separated Algeria from France, the more prosperous colons kept close contact with metropolitan France and had access to the corridors of power there. These colons regarded themselves as superior to the indigeous population and were later opposed to plans to grant Algerians full French citizenship.

Tunisia

Euro- pean in- fluence

The Tunis regency was the most westernised of the Maghrib states and the most open to European influence. Tunisia had been under the authority of Algeria from 1756 but in the first decade of the nineteenth century the Tunisians succeeded in driving the Algerians out of the country. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, in response to European pressure the bey promised to ban privateering and to open up his country to trade and other European activity. In the hope that he would be able to make inroads into eastern Algeria the bey welcomed the French invasion of Algeria. But when he realised that the French presence in Algeria was not going to be temporary, he did not feel quite so comfortable about having the Europeans on his unstable borders. On the other side of Tunisia, in Tripoli, in 1835 the Ottoman sultan had taken advantage of civil war to reassert his direct authority over Tripoli. This was a precedent that the bey did not want repeated in Tunisia. With a possible French threat on one side and on the other the Ottoman Turks, who seemed anxious to assume more direct control in the Maghrib, the bey was pleased to cultivate British support in order to maintain his freedom. In return for British help, in a series of decrees between 1841 and 1846 the bey abolished slavery. He was strong enough to enforce these decrees, and the economic loss was cushioned to a certain extent because the economy had a sound foundation based on grain and fruit, cloth, leather goods and metalware.

Euro- pean aspira- tions

The increase in French influence in Tunisia in the 1860s and 1870s made the British uneasy, although they had no intention of taking over Tunisia themselves. To counteract this they encouraged the Turkish sultan to reassert his authority, but this had the effect of driving the bey into the arms of France. The French were not the only ones to have designs on Tunisia. The Italians had begun to dream of resurrecting the Roman empire in Africa, and as the site of ancient Carthage Tunis had an obvious appeal. Moreover, there were more Italians in Tunisia than there were subjects of any of the other powers.

Econ- omic prob- lems

There are very strong parallels between the troubles that beset Ismail in Egypt and the financial problems of the beys. The abolition of the slave trade had led to a loss of income; added to a great deal of inefficiency and corruption, this resulted in a financial crisis. Money was borrowed from foreign banks (mostly French). Some of the loans were negotiated on very unfavourable terms. At the same time the beys embarked on a policy of modernisation and reform, for which they required European expertise and finance. Huge sums of money were borrowed, but the management of these loans left

much to be desired and the state drifted into financial deep waters. The beys were forced to increase taxation and to compel certain groups who had hitherto not paid tax to do so. There was a major rebellion against the government in 1864. The French consul mediated between the government and rebels and persuaded the bey to abolish the constitution and to abandon reforms. The resistance was put down savagely. But because the government was unable to raise more money through taxes, further loans had to be raised.

**Euro-
pean
stran-
glehold**

The contracting of these loans was accompanied by greater involvement by Europe in the affairs of Tunisia. It was not only the loans that brought Europe into Tunisia. Mohammed Bey (1855–1859) granted foreigners the right to own property, which led to more intervention in the country. By 1869 the bey was in so much trouble that an international commission representing French, British and Italian interests was appointed to control Tunisian finances.

**British
involve-
ment**

Britain relied on shoring up the ailing Turkish empire in order to safeguard its interests in the eastern Mediterranean. Believing that the Ottoman empire was in danger of imminent collapse, Britain occupied Cyprus in 1878. To allay French apprehension about this move, Britain let it be known that it was prepared to give France freedom of action in Tunisia in compensation. Britain supported the French presence there because it realised that there was no question of the Ottoman sultan being strong enough to take over direct authority in Tunisia, and it was also concerned at recent signs that the now-united Italy was about to embark on an expansion policy. Britain much preferred to have France in Tunisia than Italy. If Tunis fell into Italy's hands this would mean that a potentially hostile European power would control both sides of the Mediterranean Sea at its narrowest point. During the Congress of Berlin in 1878, France's refusal to align itself with Russia in the aftermath of the Turkish defeat of 1877–1878 made it the key figure in the balance of power in the Near East. Its attitude enabled Austria and Britain to stop Russian ambitions in the Balkans without having to call upon Bismarck to make the unwelcome choice either of going against Austria or of openly opposing Russia. Bismarck and Britain were grateful and did everything they could to ensure that France did not change its attitude. In addition, Bismarck was keen to divert French attention from the loss of Alsace-Lorraine in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871 and encouraged it to annex Tunisia. France did so in 1881.

**Finan-
cial
predi-
cament**

Here again, there can be little doubt but that increasing European influence was a dominant feature of nineteenth-century Tunisia. Contact with the outside world in the form of piracy and slave trading initially brought greater involvement. The desire to modernise and reform (although historians have considered the reforms to have been quite impractical and ill-advised, not at all suited to Tunisia) led to borrowing from European banks and the inability to repay. Loss of economic independence put the country at the mercy of European powers. It was only European concern with the balance of power that had prevented the earlier takeover of the country, and once Britain had decided to alter its policy on Tunisia, the fate of the country was sealed. The irony is that in both Egypt and in Tunisia it started with a desire for independence from the Ottoman sultan. The difficulty in raising money was also a common factor, and the

beys, like other rulers, tried to raise money by taxes. But by the time that they resorted to this expedient, they had already become so unpopular that rebellion and resistance was the response to the demands for money.

Libya

Three areas

Modern Libya comprises three areas: Tripolitania, often referred to simply as Tripoli, which is the westernmost part of the country, Cyrenaica to the east, and the Fezzan to the south of Tripolitania in the central Sahara. It was more dominated by the Sahara than was either Algeria or Tunisia and European capital did not find it quite so attractive. In practice this meant that Libya preserved its identity for much longer than these other states. It was in this area that the trans-Saharan caravan routes flourished right up to the end of the nineteenth century. The route to Tripoli was important up to 1903 and the Benghazi route retained its vitality until 1911.

Piracy

Most of the population consisted of inland nomads, shepherds or cameleers. On the coast profits were made from long-distance and regional trade, and there was a flourishing handcraft industry. Up to 1815 privateering was an important source of revenue. At the end of the eighteenth century Yusuf Karamanli was in power in Tripoli, and the wrath of the European powers and America was directed at him because he refused to take effective steps to end piracy. This led to war with the United States between 1801 and 1805 and Tripoli was blockaded. Yusuf emerged triumphant from this encounter, but the days of piracy were numbered. In 1815 the European powers placed a ban on privateering. This, together with the policing of the seas, reduced privateering considerably, although in the early 1830s France still found it necessary to exert pressure on Libya not to attack French shipping to Algeria. Karamanli was forced to accept an agreement whereby he would abolish all trading monopolies in his land, stop enslaving Christians and compensate Frenchmen for the losses he had caused them.

Economic problems

With the decline in privateering, the revenue it had provided also declined. Economic hardship was aggravated by Yusuf's weak administration. Debts mounted and his attempt in 1830 to levy taxes on those groups who had hitherto been exempt led to widespread rebellion in both the Fezzan and on the coast. Europeans were playing an increasing role in the life of Tripoli and unlike Mohammed Ali, the rulers in Ethiopia or other North African rulers, he did nothing to modernise his army.

Ottoman control

During these troubles the Bedouin of the Fezzan broke away from Tripoli. The chaotic situation gave the Ottoman sultan the opportunity of re-asserting his direct authority over Tripoli and in 1835 an Ottoman governor arrived and deposed the Karamanli dynasty. The Ottomans remained in control until the Italians captured Libya in 1911. The Turks subdued most of the coastal peoples, but their hold on the Fezzan and Cyrenaica was slight. The Turks could afford to keep only a small force of 8 000 men in Libya, and so long as the Libyan provinces paid an annual tribute and did not expect the Ottoman sultans to intervene in their troubles, the Ottomans were content to allow them a good deal of freedom.

- Sanusi Order** In Cyrenaica the situation remained anarchical and the Turkish government scarcely made its presence felt here. Fortunately for the Turks a new Muslim order, established on the Cyrenaica central plateau in 1843 by Mohammed ben ali ben as-sanusi, spread over a wide area and brought a measure of order to the interior. From their headquarters in Cyrenaica, emissaries of the Sanusi Order spread out over Cyrenaica and the Fezzan, establishing lodges or zawiyas, and bringing unity to the warring Bedouin. They acted as arbiters in the endless disputes that divided the various Bedouin groups and from 1856 the Turks used them as intermediaries between themselves and the Bedouin. Zawiyas were soon to be found not only throughout Cyrenaica and the Fezzan, but also in Wadai, Kanem-Borno and as far west as Timbuktu.
- Trade routes** The Sanusi played a crucial role in reopening the trade routes of the interior, which had been disrupted as a result of the disorder in Libya and the wars that had broken out around Borno after the death of al-Kanemi in 1835. The old trading route between Tripoli and Borno came into use again. It was Sanusi influence that made the route from Benghazi to Wadai the most important of the trans-Saharan trade routes. The Turks were pleased at the revival of trade and left the government of the interior in their hands, lacking both the will and the means to intervene effectively in the area themselves.

Morocco

- Similarities** There are some striking similarities between the way in which Morocco was drawn into the world economy in the nineteenth century and the examples of Egypt and other Maghrib countries. The problems facing the mulays of Morocco were modernisation and reform, and the money required for them. An important part of the process of modernisation and reform, as well as the collection of taxes, was the creation of an efficient, modern army. But there were important differences in the precise form in which these problems manifested themselves, as well as the way in which they were addressed by Moroccan rulers.
- European influence** Mulay Suleiman (1792–1822) followed a policy of isolation towards the outside world. He showed little interest in Europe and European trade, and in 1817, to prevent conflicts with Europe, he put a ban on privateering. He discouraged the settlement of Europeans in Morocco, and the few who were allowed in were forced to remain at the coast, particularly in Tangier. But despite these measures European influence grew, albeit at a slower pace than elsewhere in the Maghrib. After 1830 France was active on Morocco's eastern borders as it subdued Algeria. For centuries there had been a Spanish presence on the north coast of Morocco at Melilla and Ceuta, and on a number of occasions the Spaniards showed signs of wanting to extend their authority deeper into the interior. Then across the narrow straits was the British base of Gibraltar.
- End of isolation: France** It was the French who first broke through Morocco's isolation. Abd al-Qadir's resistance to the French occupation was conducted mainly from western Algeria and in 1843 he took refuge in Morocco when he was hard pressed by French forces. Public feeling in Morocco was very much on Abd-al Qadir's side, and yielding to pressure, Mulay

Abd al-Rahman (1822–1859) sent troops to his aid. The French retaliated by bombarding Tangier and Mogador, while the French general Bugeaud inflicted a crushing defeat on the Moroccan forces. Fortunately the French were fully engaged in putting down resistance to their rule in Algeria and did not want to occupy Morocco – they only wanted to teach the Moroccans a lesson. When peace was concluded in 1845 the mulay agreed to expel Abd al-Qadir should he ever enter Morocco again. Abd al-Rahman kept his word and, when Abd al-Qadir again entered Morocco two years later, Moroccan troops were sent against him.

Spanish invasion Abd al-Rahman's successor, Sidi Mohammed (1859–1873), had to deal with a Spanish invasion. When Spain failed to obtain a satisfactory assurance from Sidi Mohammed after the Spanish enclave of Ceuta had been raided by some Anjera tribesmen, it used the issue as a pretext for declaring war in 1859. By February 1860 Tetuan was in Spanish hands and the Spaniards were poised to advance deeper into Morocco. Britain did not want Spain to take over Morocco and it intervened to restore peace in April 1860. So here again it was a case of international rivalry limiting the actions of a European power. Throughout the nineteenth century Britain adhered to a policy of protecting Morocco's independence against the designs of others.

Inter-vention Despite the British intervention, the war with Spain opened the way for European interference in Morocco. In the peace agreement with Spain Morocco had to pay an enormous war indemnity while the Spanish hold on the coast was strengthened and its enclave enlarged.

The need to raise the indemnity was partly responsible for the greater intervention of foreigners in the affairs of Morocco. In order to pay Spain, a loan was contracted in London on the security of the Moroccan customs dues, the collection of which was taken over by foreign commissioners. As 60 per cent of the customs receipts were earmarked for war reparation payments, Spanish inspectors had to vet the customs receipts. At the same time Europeans were putting pressure on Morocco to relax restrictions on their trading with the country, and to this end they saw the reform of the monetary and tax collection system as necessary. The Europeans wanted a balance in the reforms. Anything that facilitated their trade and improved the security of their operations was welcome, but at the same time countries such as France and Spain did not want the Moroccan state to become so strong that it could resist their demands. France wanted Morocco to remain poor and weak so that when the time was ripe she could step in. The sultan was under attack from both sides. On the one hand the Europeans were urging him to reform and modernise, but on the other many of his advisers, and the majority of his followers, were conservative in the extreme, so that he was precluded from any reform of the educational, judiciary or religious institutions. Reforms in other spheres were limited by his meagre financial resources.

Econ-omic prob-lems In the 1860s Morocco received good prices for her wool, hides and corn, but as Australian and American products became more competitive in the 1870s, largely as a result of the greater use of the steamship and railway, her revenue from exports fell sharply. By the time that Mulay Hassan (1873–1894) took over, the Moroccan market

was being flooded by cheap Manchester cotton goods, and in many instances the local textile industry was ruined. To add to the problems facing Morocco's rulers in this period, there were a number of serious famines, namely in 1850, 1857, 1867 and in the years 1878–1881, when some 64 000 Moroccans emigrated. Many other Moroccans drifted to the coastal cities during these times of distress, creating new problems.

Taxation Mulay Hassan embarked on a campaign to obtain more money from taxes. The problem of collecting taxes had always limited the power of the mulay. It was a problem that was not satisfactorily resolved in the nineteenth century. The trouble was that the country was deeply divided. There were mountain villages in the Atlas Mountains where no mulay had ever succeeded in asserting his authority. The country was divided into a region that came under the control of the central government and was known as the bilad al-makhzen and another section where the control of the central government was virtually non-existent. This was known as the bilad al-siba ('the area of dissidence'). Taxes could be obtained from the area that recognised the government but the only way a mulay could extract anything from the bilad al-siba was by undertaking military expeditions in the area and forcing people to part with their goods. Every mulay led expeditions into this area, if only to make the dissidents aware of his existence. Mulay Hassan took steps to transform his ragged tribal levies into a modern efficient standing army, obtaining foreign military advisers and buying modern equipment. His army reforms remained limited, however. Even so, they strained his financial resources, and he increased taxes and made more raids on the bilad al-siba. This caused much resentment but there was no major revolt against his rule. Despite these attempts Morocco's financial situation remained perilous, although Hassan did largely succeed in meeting his budget. But he could do so only by tying himself more closely to European interests at the expense of his position among the people of Morocco.

'Protection' Although to some extent Hassan succeeded in avoiding the situation in which Egypt and Tunisia found themselves, Europeans did obtain greater control over Moroccan finances. The jealousies between the representatives of the various foreign governments prevented an effective system of financial reform from being implemented, thus worsening the situation. The European powers obtained a special status in Tangier, while the custom of Europeans giving 'protection' to Moroccans in their service weakened the hold of the mulay over his subjects as to all intents and purposes these Moroccans were removed from his jurisdiction. The 'capitulations' in Egypt had the same effect. Britain in its support for Moroccan independence pressed Hassan to make reforms. As a result of British efforts an international conference met in Madrid in 1880. Hassan was confident that the system of 'protection' would be ended. But the conference gave the system official recognition by regulating it, although it did restrict the number of people who could claim 'protection'; it also extended the scope of the special trading privileges that Britain, France and Spain had enjoyed in Morocco.

Mulay Hassan thus had to deal with more European interference in the affairs of Morocco, but with clever diplomacy he played off Britain and France against one another and frustrated French plans to turn Morocco into a French colony. Although the

European presence was increasing, by 1870, at which time Egypt had some 100 000 foreigners, Tunisia 14 000 and Algeria 245 000, Morocco had only 1 500 foreigners.

TRANS-SAHARAN TRADE ROUTES

Nomad raids As we have seen, since earliest times there had been a long-range system of trading across the Sahara, as well as a shorter regional trade between the desert dwellers and the people of the Sahel. But the Sahara as a whole remained remote and isolated, so that the way of life of its inhabitants had changed slowly. Nomads with camels could make lightning raids on the oasis dwellers and the more settled agriculturists of the Sahel. Although they could and did destroy crops and date palms, their main aim was to control and obtain a share of agricultural production. They wanted tribute. In order to obtain the grain and other products they needed, the desert nomads had to rely on trade, plunder and tribute. Although the raids of the desert nomads were very effective in the desert itself, they could not operate with any success beyond the fringes of the desert. They did not have the means or the numbers to dominate the more heavily populated areas outside the desert.

Role of nomads in trade The inhabitants of oases relied very much on selling their dates in order to obtain wheat and barley that were produced further north where rainfall permitted cultivation. For those closer to the southern fringe of the desert, dates could be exchanged for millet. And, of course, being situated at strategic points on the long-distance trading routes, they were deeply involved in trading. Although nomad groups could trade slaves and other articles on their own account, they could not compete with the settled merchants of the northern oases, who were financed by middlemen on the coast. So the principal role of nomads in the trans-Saharan trade was to provide transport animals, guides and military escorts for caravans. They also made deliveries on behalf of merchants.

Involvement in international trade But even their way of life was not proof against the penetration of the world economy, and in the course of the nineteenth century the Sahara was increasingly drawn into international trade. By the end of the century the lives of many of the desert dwellers had been changed, while the relationship between the Sahara and the outside world was at the same time altered considerably. In the course of the nineteenth century there were a number of shifts in the popularity of the various trade routes. It was the most westerly trade routes in particular that suffered from the competition provided by trade links spreading into the interior from the Atlantic coast. But, in general, the trans-Saharan trade route as such did not go into a decline until Atlantic shipping and overland transport (railways) became more efficient costwise. It was only towards the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century that it became cheaper for the people of the western Sudan to transport goods to the Atlantic coast than to take them overland to the North African coast. Until the 1880s political developments largely affected the trade routes. Some of these changes were more obviously due to the growing presence of Europe.

French occupation In many ways the French occupation of Algeria destroyed the economic unity of North Africa. In the first place it disrupted east-west caravan traffic along the northern fringes

of the desert. These served mainly pilgrims and short-distance trade. The French presence also had a major impact on the shifting of the long-distance trans-Saharan trade routes. In the early days of the French occupation, British products came into western Algeria via the Moroccan port of Tetuan. After 1837 there was a lively trade between Tetuan and Abd al-Qadir, particularly in arms. But after the fall of Abd al-Qadir, trade declined. Part of the reason for this was that the French placed restrictions on goods entering Algeria from neighbouring territories, while duties on goods coming from the western Sudan were unusually high. Although the French in the 1850s and 1860s took steps to remedy the situation, trade in this region remained quiet.

Because of fierce resistance French progress into the Algerian interior had been slow, but when the French eventually arrived they remained there. Nomads and oasis dwellers alike found themselves having to deal with a permanent army of occupation equipped with modern weapons. This was something completely new in their experience. Another factor contributing to the decline of trade routes in this region was the collapse of the Algerian demand for slaves, but one must add that the Algerian slave trade had never been as large as that of some of the other North African depots. The Algerian trade route was ruined too by the lack of a secure climate within which the caravans could operate, for hostilities between the French and one or other group could break out at any moment, to the disadvantage of the caravans.

Moroccan trade The trans-Saharan trade route to Algeria declined, but the trade routes to the west of Algeria did well and tended to move westwards in Morocco. The founding of the port of Mogador, on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, drew a good deal of trans-Saharan trade in this direction after the 1840s. Morocco resisted pressure to abolish the slave trade and emancipate slaves until 1912, so there was a ready market for slaves here. Trade to Mogador reached a peak in the late 1870s but it declined after that, and ended totally shortly after the arrival of the French in Timbuktu in 1894. From Timbuktu traffic now went by land and river to St Louis at the mouth of the Senegal River. The influence of the European presence on the west coast of Africa did not thus have an immediate and disastrous effect on the trans-Saharan trade.

Tripoli-Kano route The decline of the Algerian trans-Saharan route also resulted in an increase in the traffic along the central routes, particularly from Kano and Borno to Tripoli. The presence in this region of the Sanusi Order helped to make this a preferred route. Traffic on the Tripoli-Kano route enjoyed great popularity in the period between about 1850 and 1880, and during the short ostrich feather boom of the 1870s it reached a peak. In the depression of the 1880s it declined temporarily but improved again in the 1890s with the export of tanned goatskins. The Tripoli-Kano route lasted longer than the one to Mogador because it was further away from competing Atlantic routes. But the desert part of the route became prey to insecurity and in 1895 trade between Tripoli and Borno was disrupted to some extent by the activities of Rabiḥ Zubayr, who had moved westward from the Bahr al-Ghazal. This, together with the fact that sea transport costs became cheaper, resulted in a decline of this route after 1900. The route was finally destroyed by the arrival of the railway in Kano in 1911.

Wadai-Benghazi route After 1850 a direct link between Wadai and Benghazi, which had been discovered early in the nineteenth century, was reopened and became a major route. The direct Wadai-Benghazi route was greatly favoured by the Wadai sultans who had become increasingly powerful since the mid-eighteenth century. They liked this route since it did not go through Borno to the west or Für to the east. This route also enjoyed the protection of the Sanusi Order which provided merchants with a social, legal and commercial framework upon which they could depend; its organisation could even be used for post! They kept peace along the entire route, and they were even successful at times in appealing for the return of goods stolen in raids. The presence of the Sanusi and the remoteness of this route combined to ensure that it lasted into the twentieth century.

Slave trade Slaves were transported along all of these routes and it has been estimated that, between 1800 and 1880, 500 000 slaves entered Egypt and that 250 000 went to Morocco. Many of the slaves that were sold in Egypt came along the Nile routes, which continued until the early twentieth century. The Benghazi-Wadai route was also the source of a considerable number of the slaves sold in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries. The Sanusi were a law unto themselves, and took no heed of the Ottoman ban on the slave trade after 1857. Thus although the number of slaves being taken across the Sahara as a whole declined, because of their isolation the Tripoli-Kano and Benghazi-Wadai routes were not easily monitored by the abolitionists, and the slave trade in this region did not die out finally until the beginning of the twentieth century. On the Benghazi-Wadai route the slave trade was actually on the increase until after 1900. It should also be remembered that there was a great demand for slave labour in the desert itself, to work on date plantations and vegetable gardens in the oases. Slaves too toiled in very harsh conditions in the rock-salt mines.

Various trading articles The ivory trade peaked around 1877; from about 1878 to 1883 ostrich feathers became a major item of trade, followed by tanned goatskins, which were used for women's footwear in the United States. Like the ostrich feather boom, the demand for goatskins also declined once America started using the chrome-tanning process and women decided they preferred undyed skins. Other items of trade were resin, leather work, kola nuts, fabrics dyed with indigo, and inevitably some gold. These products came mainly from the western Sudan and Hausaland, but on the routes from Borno, Wadai and Für the products were limited to ivory and slaves. There was also a constant demand for products of the Sahara itself such as salt, dates from oases and cereals from the Sahel.

Firearms For much the same reasons as the slave trade continued to be lively, the trade in firearms flourished despite attempts by Europe to stop it. Benghazi was in the forefront of selling 18-shot Winchester repeaters in the 1880s. Originally bought for use by caravan escorts, large numbers of guns undoubtedly came into the hands of desert raiders. In Morocco at the end of the nineteenth century there was a great trade in the 1860 model single-shot Remington breechloader. Although the evidence is somewhat obscure it is possible that the increase in the incidence of raiding on the Tripoli-Kano route may have been due to the spread of these firearms to raiders.

- Im-ported goods** As the century progressed more English cotton goods were imported, and by 1860 these amounted to 70 per cent of the value of imports. North African woollen garments from Tripolitania went south, as did textiles from Austro-Hungary, medicines, jewellery, silks, and above all, weapons and ammunition. European manufactured goods became cheaper as time went by, but for many years they were relatively expensive because of the high costs of transport and only the wealthy could afford them. As they became cheaper with mass production, imports increased more quickly than exports, and this caused foreign exchange problems. Although indigenous craftsmen in the Sahel and the western and central Sudan had been protected by their isolation from competing foreign imports, manufactured articles from Europe eventually reached them as well.
- Over-view** This brief look at trans-Saharan trade routes shows that there was a vigorous traffic for most of the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly the pull of the European presence on the west coast affected the trade routes, particularly the more westerly. The presence of another European power, France, in Algeria, also had an effect in the shift in trade routes. Although the French had hoped that their occupation of Algeria would draw trade through Algeria, ironically it did not. The vitality of the routes further east owed little to direct European presence. Indeed, they owed much to the absence of Europe. The fact that Libya was controlled by the Ottomans provided the opportunity for the Sanusi Order to expand and impose order on large parts of the Sahara. The Kano–Tripoli and Wadai–Benghazi routes did not decline irreversibly until the beginning of the twentieth century. Conditions created by the Sanusi, the isolation of the region from the pull of the Atlantic coast and the fact that for a long time there was no reduction in the costs of transport to the coast, together with the relative poverty of the region from a European point of view, go a long way towards explaining this. Thus trans-Saharan trade went into an irreversible decline only about 1900 when it became more expensive to convey goods overland by caravan than it was to transport them by rail to the coast and by ship to their destinations. In the east, the isolated position of Wadai enabled the overland route to survive until 1911.
- Chang-ing pat-terns of trade** So even in the Sahara the intrusion of European goods and the demands created by European capital were steadily changing the pattern of trade. Libya was more isolated, and the establishment of direct Turkish rule there in 1835 protected the region from European capital, which was also not attracted to the area because of its poverty and remoteness. Ethiopia's survival also owed something to its geographical remoteness and poverty, but access to the goods of European capital, such as guns, enabled people such as Johannes and Menelik to embark on expansionist programmes and to ward off the threat from Egypt.
- Grow-ing Eu-ropean pre-sence** So there were common features in these areas in the period from 1800 to about 1880. The processes that began early in the century accelerated after mid-century. No state could ignore the growing presence of European traders and consuls. Nor did most of them want to. People developed a taste for European cloth and guns, and the Europeans wanted their cotton, ivory and slaves. They did not see the Europeans as a threat. It used to be fashionable in historical circles to see Europe as opening up Africa. But the other

side of the coin needs to be emphasised, that Africa was in fact opening itself up commercially to Europe.

Notes

- 1 R. Robinson & J. Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: The official mind of imperialism*.
- 2 N. Ivanov, 'New patterns of European intervention in the Maghrib', in J. F. A. Ajayi (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. 6, *Africa in the nineteenth century until the 1880s*, p. 500.



The partition of Africa: an overview

Annex- ation of African territory

In 1880 very little of Africa was under European control. By 1900 very little was not. We have seen that although the range of their interests on the coasts was expanding and their influence in the interior increasing, particularly in West Africa, by about 1880 the European powers in general were reluctant to assume new formal responsibilities in Africa. It is true that the European powers had been nibbling away at the North and West African coasts for many years, and that as the nineteenth century wore on so the process accelerated, yet by 1880 they had relatively few formal colonies. It is also true that the growing technological gap between Europe and Africa, which has been mentioned so often in earlier chapters, made it inevitable that Europe would interfere more in African affairs. But there was no reason to suppose that such interference would manifest itself in the wholesale formal annexation of African territories. Yet this is what happened. After 1880 various European powers began formally annexing African territories with a haste that has led it to be called the 'scramble' for Africa. What were the reasons for this change, why did it occur so quickly, and why did it take place at that particular time? Some of the answers will have to be sought in Europe and others in Africa itself.

**Im-
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and Af-
rican
histo-
rians**

At the outset it should be stressed that the subject is a controversial one. Although the facts themselves are generally not in dispute, the *significance* of these facts is very much a matter for debate. Thus while no-one questions that Britain occupied Egypt in 1882, the significance of that event on the partitioning of Africa has been the subject of vigorous disagreement. And what complicates the issue is that very often imperial and African historians do not look at the same facts at all.

This is because many historians interested in the history of Africa in the last quarter of the nineteenth century have tended to see the partition of the continent either as an episode in the history of imperialism or as an episode in the formative history of Africa. This is not to deny that there are historians who, eschewing labels, do not classify themselves as either imperial or African historians, and who attempt to steer a middle course between these two extremes. Imperial history is interested mainly in the causes of the partition, which are found principally outside Africa, in relations between the European powers and in the perceptions of the industrialised regions of the world as to what their relationships with unindustrialised Africa should be. African history, on the other hand, is far more concerned with the effects of the partition on Africa. Its main concern is the actions of European powers in Africa and the African response. The relationships between the European powers and their aims are not important to them. In the same way, in colonial historiography the conquest of African polities simply details the actual mechanics by which Africa was taken over, and is not so important as what impelled Europe to partition the continent. In contrast, to many African historiographers the conquest was of paramount importance. One of the main differences between African and European historians studying the colonial era concerns the amount of attention which should be given to African resistance. This difference is reflected in volume 7 of the *Unesco general history of Africa* and volume 6 of the *Cambridge history of Africa*. In the latter most of the contributors are Europeans, and the balance of power between Europe and Africa and what impelled Europe to 'go into' Africa are important; the details of the armed clashes receive far less attention. The writers in the Unesco volume are mainly Africans, and one third of the volume is devoted to resistance to colonial conquest.

**Two
scram-
bles for
Africa**

John Lonsdale has pointed out there were really two scrambles for Africa – the first in the mid-1880s and the second in the 1890s.¹ Not many Africans were directly affected by the first scramble, which was characterised by treaty-making between small groups of Europeans and African rulers and was aimed at staking claims that other European powers would recognise. These treaty-making Europeans were not seen by the African rulers as different from the various other European groups that had come through their territory earlier, such as explorers and missionaries, who had also carried flags and bits of paper and said they wished to be friends. Whether the rulers who put their crosses to the printed treaty forms that the Europeans brought with them from Europe understood what their crosses meant, or in what terms they interpreted them, was not important to the Europeans, who showed the Africans where to place their crosses. Nor was it significant in the long run. Whether or not they had signed treaties, the Africans lost their independence anyway. What the treaties were aimed at was staking claims

that would be recognised by other European powers. The treaties were designed to keep other powers out of certain specific areas.

**Both
scram-
bles im-
portant**

The first partition of the continent is often called the 'paper partition', because the lines of division and borders were drawn in the chancelleries of Europe based on paper claims (treaties). After these paper claims had been established they had to be put into effect on the ground. In imperial history this represents the second scramble for Africa. To some African historians this is the only scramble that really matters. But both scrambles are important. The European diplomatic manoeuvring has relevance for African history because it largely determined the shape of colonial Africa: it determined its borders (which have largely remained the same in modern times), while the colonial policies adopted provided the essential background to local responses and initiatives, including the liberation struggles. The second scramble is important for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is to demonstrate the baselessness of the myth that European rule was welcomed by African societies. The nature and variety of African responses to the impact of Europe is complex, and it is clear that any general statement beyond the fact that Africans prized their independence and sought to preserve it in any way open to them has to be a highly qualified one that takes into account local circumstances and many subtle nuances.

**No
simple
expla-
nation**

We should not expect any simple or generally acceptable explanation for the European partition of Africa. We shall have to find a path through a minefield of conflicting interpretations and opposing viewpoints, but in the end we should not expect to come up with a nice neat answer. The partitioning was a complex process; the reasons why it happened are likewise complex. We would do well to bear in mind the words of L. H. Gann: 'All things considered, a pluralistic explanation appears to make more sense ... In fact there were not one, but many European imperialisms, all of them interwoven with missionary, military or mercantile strands, with metropolitan, local and international threads. All these strands combined to produce the pattern of white expansion ... and by the early 1880s a convergence of many forces resulted in the rapid partition of Africa. Each of these forces had multiple causes. Each one in turn requires a pluralistic explanation. Each one of them contained an element of the fortuitous.'²

Reasons In an attempt to place the partitioning in perspective, we shall first analyse the reasons for greater interest in Africa at this time. Then we shall go on to analyse why this new interest should have found expression in a sudden rush to carve out formal colonies.

INDUSTRIALISATION, TECHNOLOGY, AND EXPANSION

**New
Im-
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ism**

The new economic situation that faced Europe in this period and which gave rise to the so-called New Imperialism, was not confined to Africa and the same period witnessed great European activity in Asia. In fact, Asia was a far more important prize than Africa. What distinguished the New Imperialism from older types of imperialism was that it was rooted in the industrial revolution, which for a time made Britain the 'workshop of the world'. For a variety of reasons, which included maritime supremacy, the availability of coal and iron in close proximity to one another, and new inventions, the

industrial revolution first took place in Britain. British producers and exporters favoured free trade and open competition in unrestricted markets. Free trade meant that no nation had the right to interfere with another's trading activities. In practice this meant that Britain was dominant for it had the cheapest mass-manufactured goods and also the biggest merchant navy to transport these goods. In the first half of the nineteenth century Britain secured a preponderant share of the world's export trade in manufactured goods and of the carrying trade. No other nation could compete with it. In the golden era of British trade in the first half of the nineteenth century, when it was supreme at sea, with no significant foreign rivals, informal spheres of influence served British needs admirably. Britain had no need for formal colonies. It already dominated trade without colonies. In 1852 Benjamin Disraeli, later to be prime minister of England, expressed the opinion that colonies were 'millstones around our necks'. 'Little Englanders' agreed that colonies were a burden to the mother country, that Britain was better off without them.

Britain's strong position Between 1763 and the 1820s the old colonial system declined; Britain was divested of its American colonies, the first French empire crumbled and Portugal and Spain lost their colonies. Although in the period between the 1820s and the 1880s European powers did not totally turn their backs on colonies, relatively speaking there were few annexations. One of the reasons given for this lack of activity is that Britain was so strong that it was in a position to deter others from making serious inroads into its comfortable informal trading empire. Until the 1880s Britain thought in terms of preventing others from staking claims; it did not stake claims itself. Informal control suited it. All Britain had to do was to persuade France and Germany to maintain policies of free trade in Africa. But it could not control the other powers, nor could it direct developments in Africa. The success of informal control depended very much on British supremacy at sea, the absence of foreign rivals and the existence of stable governments in Africa. In the last part of the nineteenth century all three of these preconditions disappeared.

European industrialisation Britain soon had to deal with foreign rivals in Africa. Up to 1850 Britain was the only industrialised power, but between 1860 and 1871 Britain's position was beginning to be challenged by the emergence of a unified Italy and Germany. Germany appeared to be the most powerful of the new industrial states in Europe. The Mont Cenis and St Gothard tunnels through the Alps, completed in 1871 and 1872 respectively, gave it products convenient entry into the Mediterranean area. A growing merchant fleet took German products to the far corners of the world; Hamburg merchants were rapidly expanding their trade with Africa. At the same time the scientific utilisation of water power developed northern Italy, especially Turin and Milan, into an industrial region. For a long time France had been restrained because of a declining or static birth rate, but it also began industrialising, although at a much slower pace.

The United States After the Civil War of 1861–1865 a reborn and consolidated United States of America made rapid strides towards industrialisation. The war itself gave a fillip to the production of iron, coal and steel; westward expansion saw the completion of a trans-continental rail link between California and the east coast in 1869. Between 1860 and 1900

some 14 million people, mainly Europeans, emigrated to the United States. The immense natural resources of the country, absence of threats from any neighbouring states, and the increase in population, led to rapid industrialisation, so that by 1890 it had the largest factory system in the world. American traders looked to other countries to expand their activities, having largely satisfied the domestic demand. This meant that, at the same time as countries such as France, Italy and Germany were industrialising and producing more cheap manufactured goods which they wished to sell abroad, the United States was providing stiff competition in markets in Latin America and the Pacific region. Trading conditions in the New World thus became that much tighter, so that European traders had to search for new markets elsewhere. More traders began gravitating towards Africa which hitherto had not been a particularly attractive prospect, except for South Africa and Egypt.

**Free
trade
and tariff
walls**

The situation was aggravated by the so-called Great Depression in Europe from about 1874. This was brought about essentially because foreign and domestic demand for products was not growing so fast as the capacity of the new machinery to produce those goods. This too pointed towards the opening of new markets. Because all of the nations expanded industrially in separate compartments, each determining its own economic policy, the newly industrialised nations saw tariffs as a means of protecting their infant industries and excluding rivals. As they read the situation, the mercantilism applied by Britain early in the century had enabled it to dominate world markets. Once it was supreme, it sponsored free trade. The other European nations argued that if they also adopted free trade they would not give their developing industrial sectors the opportunity of maturing or of competing successfully with British products. They felt that only through the imposition of tariff barriers could they maintain their position. By 1879, with tariffs in Spain and Germany, and tariff changes imminent in Italy and Austria-Hungary, it seemed as if there would be a general movement towards tariffs. Because of the slower pace of its industrial development, France especially needed to protect its home markets against foreign rivals. This tendency towards the establishment of exclusive trading areas hints at pressures in favour of taking formal control.

**Need
for new
markets**

A shrinking world, saturated markets, and the search for new exclusive markets focused attention on Africa. Britain now had to face more competition in Africa from other European powers. The entry of new traders in the second half of the nineteenth century was also promoted by the advent of the steamship. So at the same time as pressure in older markets was beginning to build up, encouraging more traders to look towards tropical Africa, the steamship was also making it easier for small traders to enter the African market.

**Euro-
pean
expectations**

At the time, many people believed that the interior of Africa would turn out to be another El Dorado. By the late 1870s, depression and the need for new cheaper markets, reinforced by explorers' reports of El Dorados in the interior, gave people hope for the potential of Africa. Trade and capital export would both be of great benefit to Europe, so it was said. Not everyone believed this of course, but there was a widespread belief that Africa would yield untapped sources of raw materials such as had been discovered in the late 1860s in Kimberley and in the mid-1880s on the Witwatersrand, and also that

it would provide a vast market for Europe's manufactures. In most instances these expectations were not fulfilled. Trade with Africa remained small. In the case of Britain, until 1914 trade and capital export remained in the region of 1 per cent of its total trade and total export of capital. Africa lacked the infrastructure or economy to act as a large market for European manufactured goods. Expectations were great, however, and it was expectations, whether realised or not, that were important motives for entry into Africa.

**Technological
advances**

At the same time technological developments gave Victorian leaders great confidence in their ability to take over political control of Africa and exploit it economically. Technological developments made action in Africa both possible and more affordable. Quinine made the interior of tropical Africa more accessible to Europeans, while the steamship transformed the nature of trading relations. Great things were expected of railways and it seemed as if they would soon open up the interior as steam engines raced inland. In 1879 French policy-makers were talking of linking up French interests in Algeria with those in Senegal via the railway line. The railway was indeed to revolutionise transport but it was not quite so easy as enthusiasts in the 1880s thought it would be. Major railroad construction had to wait until the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century, although numerous smaller lines were built before then.

**Military
technology**

Then there was the very important military technology, with the development of the breech-loading rifle and, in the last days of the scramble, the Maxim gun. Breech-loaders, which had a much improved rate of firing, and which had first been used on a large scale in the American Civil War, began to be imported into Africa by Europeans after the Franco-Prussian War. Relatively few of them, however, found their way into the hands of Africans, which meant that Africans armed with muzzle-loading muskets had to face Europeans who had guns that had six times the range and could fire at ten times the rate. Coinciding with the final stages of the partition of Africa, when clashes were more frequent, was the development of automatic guns. The multi-barrelled guns of Gatling and Nordenfeldt were followed in 1889 by an automatic machine-gun developed by Hiram Maxim and which bore his name. Hilaire Belloc, the British anti-imperialist poet, in his 'Modern Traveller' summed up its effect in a sarcastic couplet:

Whatever happens, we have got
The Maxim gun and they have not

THE ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

**Hobson's
economic
model**

We have now examined a number of factors that promoted the penetration and conquest of Africa, but we have still not come to the crucial question of why European governments should have taken exclusive formal control over these far-off places, many of them with unpronounceable names, and why they should have done so at that particular time. Among the theories advanced to account for the partition the economic ones have generally held pride of place. Having looked at the general economic situation as background to increased interest in Africa, it is now time to look at a more

specific economic model. The Anglo-Boer War in particular, with its overtones of mining capital involvement, gave a sinister new connotation to the word imperialism. J. A. Hobson, who had been in Johannesburg in 1899 when he covered the war for the *Manchester Guardian*, was convinced that the machinations of the Rhodes-controlled press had been responsible for the war. In 1902 he published his *Imperialism: A study* in which he attempted to show that the new colonies that had been annexed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century could not be justified from an economic point of view and that the colonies had been bad business for Britain, although they may have been very good business for a small group of financiers who controlled cartels and who through ownership of newspapers and other means hoodwinked the public into supporting colonial expansion. Hobson argued that under-consumption in industrialised countries and a surplus of production and capital led them to take over markets in other places. Hobson came to the conclusion that 'the distinctive feature of modern Imperialism, from the commercial standpoint, is that it adds to our empire tropical and subtropical regions with which our trade is small, precarious and unprogressive'. Vast sums of money had been spent on administering and developing backward areas, building roads, constructing railways and bridges. This money came out of the public purse, but the income from the enterprises was private – it went into the hands of few financial manipulators, huge combines and cartels.

Lenin Lenin's *Imperialism: The highest stage of capitalism* was influenced by Hobson. Leninist explanations posited that the survival, or at least the continued development of the capitalist economy in the late nineteenth century, depended very much on outlets for capital and the establishment of new markets. Although Marxist historians have cited Lenin in support of their arguments about the relationship between finance capital and the partition, Lenin was in fact not talking about Africa, and certainly not about the partition era. B. M. Ratcliffe makes the point that 'Lenin was not talking about the Partition or of monopolies and capital exports as causes of the colonial expansion of the late nineteenth century. For Lenin, imperialism, which is a new stage in the evolution of capitalism, dates only from the early twentieth century and is associated not with the division but the redivision of an already partitioned world. The late nineteenth century is but a transitional period and marks no radical departure. Lenin, then, does not provide an explanation of the Partition, nor do any of the other early twentieth-century neo-Marxist theories of imperialism.'³

'Glut of capital' Although Hobson was not speaking particularly about Africa, his analysis has relevance for the African case because generations of Marxist scholars have used such arguments to condemn 'capitalist imperialism' for the partition. Although they may have been incorrectly bringing in Hobson and Lenin in support of their conviction that the partitioning was all part of a capitalist plot, over the years large numbers of historians and publicists have accepted that in the factories of the industrialising countries there was over-production, that more was being produced than could be consumed at home, and that there was a 'glut of capital' because there was no point in capitalists investing the profits from their operations in expanding production. In terms of their belief the capitalists put pressure on their governments to take over new areas

in Africa where they could invest their money and sell their surplus production. Lenin's view that cartels, trusts and massive banking interests controlled all production and were strong enough to force governments to act in accordance with their wishes has been accepted as valid for the situation in Africa. It was capitalists who put pressure on their governments to take over new areas where they could invest the 'glut of capital'.

The nature of the economic factor

These charges against capitalism may have been based on a misreading of Hobson and Lenin, but nevertheless they forced other historians to focus their attention on the connection between the New Imperialism of the late nineteenth century and economic factors, and over the years their research has shed much light on the nature of the economic factor. Over a period of time non-Marxist scholars have systematically pulled the Hobson-Leninist theory apart. It has thus been shown that economic pressure groups were certainly not so powerful as the Marxists had made out, and that industrialists like Régis, Woermann or J. C. Goodefroy were 'within the total framework of Western capitalism ... small fry who controlled but an insignificant portion of their country's wealth'.⁴ It has also been established that, although there were a number of large trusts and cartels in America and some too in Germany, this was after 1900, and that Britain had very few. As to the argument that these companies made huge profits, this too was generally not true. The British South Africa Company, for example, did not pay a dividend until 1922.

Opposition to government intervention

But apart from all this, it became clear that far from putting pressure on their governments to establish colonies, traders and companies, initially at least, were against government interference. The new middle class in England, which arose as a result of the industrial revolution, believed that it was in the best interests of society as a whole and, of course, in the best interests of their own individual enterprises, to conduct commercial operations and to invest and accumulate capital without government intervention. They were interested in trade, not in ruling or administering colonies. Annexations remained a last resort. Given equal opportunities with the traders of other nations, it was felt that British traders could more than hold their own. If some local chiefs proved obstructive, a token show of force was all that was required to put matters right. From time to time they did call upon the government for limited short-term action to overcome some specific market difficulty, to force an indigenous chief to pay his debt or for a gunboat to bring a recalcitrant village to heel.

Government support of traders

At an early date the French government adopted a policy of lending official support to her traders. This was not because of any pressure brought by the French business community, who were on the whole indifferent to the trading opportunities provided by Africa. It was because of the weakness of French business interests to hold their own against their British counterparts. In the case of Germany, Bismarck's decision to go into the business of annexing territory was strengthened by the belief that German companies would assume the expense and burden of administering them, although he was to be disappointed in this. In this case one can almost speak of government pressure on the companies to involve themselves more actively in Africa rather than the other way around. Only in the case of Portugal could one perhaps talk of business pressure on the government. Because of its poverty and weakness, Portugal could not compete with the

industrialising nations. Its manufacturers required protected markets from which their rivals were shut out. Portuguese mercantile groups thus put pressure on the government to act positively and bring the hinterland of Angola under Portuguese control.

Capital investment in Africa From research into the supposed charges by Hobson, it is clear that financiers in England and France with surplus capital invested very little of it in Africa. Apart from South Africa and Egypt, British capital went for investment in the United States of America. As a market for British goods North America and Australia bought much more than Africa, and the rapidly expanding markets for British manufactures were the Argentine and China. A number of German companies wanted Bismarck to take over the areas in which they operated, but it is hard to portray South West Africa as a place which was required for the investment of capital that could not be gainfully employed elsewhere. Most German capital was invested in America and in Central and Eastern Europe. Germany exported ten times as much to France as it did to its colonies. France invested more in Russia than it did in Africa. When speaking of Italy, a debtor nation, or Portugal, which was poverty-stricken, it is clear that neither had money to spare for investment in Africa, or elsewhere.

Role of economic factors Although the Hobson–Lenin theory may have been largely discredited, the belief remains strong that economic factors in one form or another provided the engine for the scramble for Africa. If one argues that the basic impulse was economic because it was for economic reasons that the first Europeans went to Africa and that everything followed on from that, then it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the economic factor is basic to the partition process. But on a more sophisticated level, even if economic factors were present in most territories one cannot say that they necessarily played the crucial role in the decision to partition Africa. In some areas the economic factor was decisive, in others it was not. As we shall see there were many other reasons, and the best way of analysing their importance is to assess their weight in specific areas. The significance of the various factors changed between 1880 and 1900, as did the nature of imperialism itself, as well as government and public attitudes towards expansion.

Austen's theory Ralph Austen has an interesting point of view on the economic factor. One of his major theses is that Africa as a whole was becoming progressively less important to Europe. From about the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Europe's role in the world economy was shrinking as other continents, Asia in particular, were being opened up. Even in the first half of the nineteenth century, when the price of African produce was rising and manufactured articles were becoming cheaper, Austen believes that 'the relative value of African trade within the Atlantic economy was decreasing, in both quantitative and structural terms ... The world economy as a whole was growing at a more rapid rate than African commerce.'⁵ Africa did not provide critical products that could not be obtained elsewhere. As the world market expanded and the steamship helped to make new areas more accessible, even vegetable oils could be obtained elsewhere. African rivers had very limited navigability so for the most part they could not act as highways from the coast into the interior. Explorers who went out to establish the courses of the major rivers of Africa felt a need to justify their explorations in economic terms, but

businessmen did not have much faith in Africa's trading possibilities in the interior. It is interesting to note that the costs of the exploration were borne by geographical societies, humanitarian bodies and governments, and not by business. In the development of this line of thinking he says that in the late nineteenth century, at the time of the partition, with the fall in the prices of African products, Africa's significance for the world economy became even smaller. Austen's observation about Africa's declining share of world trade needs to be approached cautiously. The evidence to prove that this was the case is rather fragmentary.⁶

Austen: why Europe took over Africa Why then did Europe decide to take over Africa at a time when Africa was of less significance to the world economy than it had been at any other time in the past few hundred years? The answer Austen gives is that, despite the limited value of Africa, Europe took it over because it could afford to do so. Technological developments made the conquest of Africa both easier and cheaper. Austen focuses on this as an important reason why Europe partitioned Africa. Rapid technological development in Europe meant that the cost of action in far-flung places progressively decreased. In human terms, the steamship and advances in medicine made action in Africa cheaper. So did military technology such as the Gatling and Maxim guns. The costs of occupying Africa were decreasing. So Austen believes that a major factor in explaining Europe's action is 'the capacity of an economic system as flourishing as the European one to indulge itself in apparently wasteful efforts'.⁷

THE MEN ON THE SPOT AND THEIR GOVERNMENTS AT HOME

Increasing rivalry Thus far we have looked at the situation very much from the point of view of European motives and European economic needs. But to obtain another perspective we have to shift the focus to Africa itself. While Britain was trading mainly on the coast and it had no serious rivals, it interfered very little in African affairs, with the result that there was a good deal of stability. But the new competition meant that Britain and the other powers had to intervene more frequently and on a larger scale in order to secure their interests against rivals. This increased interference was accompanied by a widening of the frontiers of instability. The competition and rivalry in Africa between the traders of various nations and between big and small traders, even of the same nation, coincided more or less with a marked deterioration in the terms of trade in Africa, thus increasing the frontiers of instability.

Fieldhouse's hypothesis D. K. Fieldhouse in his book *Economics and empire*, published in 1973, while holding the view that the so-called New Imperialism was fundamentally a 'political phenomenon' resulting, as he said in an earlier article in the 1960s, from the 'fevered nationalism of Europe', believes that the causes for the partition should be sought in Africa, not in Europe. According to him, 'the vital link between economics and formal empire ... was neither the economic need of the metropolis for colonies nor the requirements of private economic interests, but the secondary consequences of problems created on the periphery by economic and other European enterprises for which there was no simple economic solution'.⁸ Fieldhouse concluded that the partition occurred when it did because it was at that time and in those places that relations between Europeans and

the indigenous peoples of Africa became fundamentally unstable. This instability was due partly to European penetration of the interior. The partitioning took place, Field-house emphasises, when economic activities led to non-economic problems which could not be solved by the usual economic methods, but had to be solved by political action (the establishment of formal control) – in other words when economic problems became politicised.

- European traders go inland** The above scenario fits the situation in West Africa, where Africa became locked into the world economy through its export of palm products – when prices fell in Europe the effect on West Africa was dramatic and had a profound destabilising effect. When the terms of trade declined in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and turned against African exporters, the old type trade, which fitted into patterns that had largely been established during the slave trade era, underwent a transformation. The only way that European traders could reduce their costs was by going inland to deal with the producers themselves, thus cutting out the middlemen.
- African traders** The depression hit African traders even harder than it did the European merchants, who could obtain credit from European banks. The depression in trade caused unrest among Africans who were now receiving less for their products than before. The intensified competition upset the relatively stable relations between merchants and African farmers and traders.
- British traders in the Niger delta** European traders tried to bypass the middlemen to make contact directly with the producers. This increasing European influence, and African resistance to it, led to the actual military conquest. Of course, in many areas it was not possible for the Europeans to go into the interior. European penetration was initially successful only in areas where European gunboats had access to the interior, as in the Niger delta. From the 1870s the village communities of the Niger delta, which had acted as middlemen during the slave trade and at the height of the palm oil trade, began attacking British trading posts as they desperately tried to prevent the Europeans from usurping their role as middlemen. By this time, however, British consuls in the area had become used to interfering in the affairs of the coastal states in order to obtain good trading conditions for British traders; the consuls, who were given no power by the British government, were fortunate in that they were able to call on the ships of the anti-slavery patrol of the West African squadron to back them and bombard the towns of the attackers. This was a fairly unusual situation for, in most other parts of Africa, action by Europeans in the interior was not possible without the major expense involved in the organisation of a military expedition.
- Position of British consuls** Not all consuls were fortunate enough to be able to call on anti-slavery patrols. Consuls in the East African interior, who were appointed to keep a watching brief on British interests in an area where Protestant missions featured prominently, were unable to do much to stop the slave trade. As Salisbury himself explained in 1888, the consul was 'a compromise between the desire of the missionaries to obtain Protection and the desire of the Home Government not to be involved in expensive operations. To please the missionaries we send a representative of the Govt.: to spare taxpayers we make him

understand that he will in no case be supported by an armed force. The only weapon left to him is bluster.⁹ Consuls were firm advocates of formal control by their government. So were local governors.

Position of local governors Local governors in Africa were expected to balance their books without recourse to the home government, and customs dues were an important source of revenue to them. Making ends meet in Africa was not easy for governors, although their masters in Europe expected it. They eyed with distaste the traders who entered Africa via unclaimed strips of coast and thus evaded duties. Where they could, these governors were eager to extend their authority further along the coast so that customs dues could not be evaded. Early in 1876 the French foreign ministry was ready, in return for Gambia, to hand over the whole of the west coast from Senegal to the British. This did not occur and the governors of Senegal and Sierra Leone became increasingly involved in disputes as they both erected customs posts in the coastal area between the two colonies in order to prevent traders from escaping customs dues. Disputes also arose when rival administrations met each other in the Gold Coast and at the frontier between Dahomey and Lagos.

Missionaries There were numerous other categories of 'men on the spot'. Another group who wanted action were the missionaries. Missionaries put pressure on their governments to annex the fields of their operations, but very often the flag that followed the missionaries was not that of the missionaries' own nationality. Thus British Baptists and Congregationalists in Cameroon and Madagascar found themselves under the German and French flags. In Leopold's Congo, the British Baptists suffered the same fate. In East Africa, French White Fathers and Holy Ghost Fathers ended up in British Uganda and German East Africa respectively. Although it has often been said that the missionaries prepared the way for the imposition of colonialism in Madagascar and in East and Central Africa, and it is true that they often welcomed it, the missionary factor was present only in certain areas. A direct link can be seen only in the case of Nyasaland.

French army officers and civil servants The mission factor was probably not so important as the actions of the French army officers who were intent on furthering their own careers, and who sometimes heated up a dormant situation so that they would have a chance to excel themselves and so gain promotion. Of course, the line between men motivated by furthering their careers and those acting in 'honour of the flag' is a fine one. A group of influential civil servants in France and army officers in Senegal were already intent on extending French power in Africa in the late 1870s. This was done largely for reasons of prestige, although there were also idealistic hopes of constructing railroads that would magically link Algeria and the Senegal River, and they were able to accomplish quite a lot despite official disapproval from home. It was the fragmentation of the French decision-making process, in which it would seem that the various bodies frequently did not tell each other what they were doing, that allowed to succeed a small group of men who were by their nature and profession rather combative towards Britain.

Conflict It is difficult to speak of a definite French policy, there were so many conflicting policy directions. There was no central coordination or control of policy and African possess-

ions came under different ministries – most of the colonies came under the Ministry of Marine and Colonies at the Rue Odinot, but the North African colonies did not. Algeria fell under the Ministry of the Interior. Tunisia, and later Morocco, came under the Foreign Ministry at the Quai d'Orsay. Until 1894 the Ministry of Marine and Colonies was not a fully-fledged ministry and, as a result, did not attract the cream of the civil servants; it was badly organised and there was not much coordination between the various departments. The various ministries were jealous of one another, and did not work well together.

Indifference of French cabinets

French cabinets were notoriously indifferent to what was going on in Africa. Christopher Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner say that the failure of the successive French cabinets to control colonial policy before the First World War was partly due to 'the constitutional weaknesses of the pre-war Third Republic: transient governments with an average life-expectancy of nine months, a poorly developed sense of cabinet responsibility, and a general preoccupation with domestic politics rather than with foreign policy. Some prime ministers were disinclined to allow their cabinets to consider foreign policy at all.' They go on to say that 'the general indifference of French cabinets to the colonies they ruled was due to something more than their own administrative deficiencies. It also reflected a widespread feeling that the Empire was of only peripheral importance to the affairs of the metropolis ... France, unlike Britain, had a continental identity and saw her vital interests overwhelmingly in continental terms. Not even the most passionate colonialists ever believed that any conquest overseas could fill the gap left by the German seizure of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871.'¹⁰

Supporters of colonial expansion

But there were a number of influential Frenchmen who did believe that colonial expansion could help France regain its lost prestige, and that, if it did not take vigorous steps to assert itself, there was a very real danger that it would become a third-rank power. The desire to regain French pride and prestige was particularly strong among army officers, who saw the drive into the West African interior as a means of restoring French greatness. The army, the civil service and those social groups who entered these professions were in the forefront of a vigorous campaign to extend France's colonial frontiers.

Subversion of government decisions

An alliance between highly placed expansionist-minded civil servants and army officers serving in Africa frequently sabotaged decisions taken at the top by the government. The men in charge in Africa, in practice if not always in theory, had much freedom of action. The government at home was dependent for information and an analysis of the situation on the man on the spot, and had to make its decisions on what he chose to tell or withhold from them. Military officers intent on extending French boundaries in the Senegal and western Sudan could do so while keeping the French government at home ignorant of what was happening until it was too late to do anything. This was possible because the officers in the field had a core of like-minded officials at home to support them.

Apathy

French business interests and the general public were apathetic towards colonial expansion. Algeria and Tunisia together were responsible for as much French trade as the rest

of the French empire combined, while Senegal accounted for over half of France's foreign trade with West Africa. But apart from these areas Africa held few attractions for French business concerns.

Attitudes to empire

Among the public there was little interest or pride in the French empire. Even in Britain it was only right at the end of the partitioning process that popular enthusiasm played a significant role, and it was rather that men such as Chamberlain used this emotional spillover to obtain what they wanted, than that this outburst in any way convinced or forced government imperialists to act. But it is nevertheless true that Britons were proud of the empire. As Andrew and Kanya-Forstner write, 'most Englishmen probably did take a pride of some sort in "the Empire on which the sun never sets"'. The sun never set on the French Empire either, but most Frenchmen did not take pride in it.¹¹ Part of the reason may be that while most British families had at least one member who was in the 'colonies', few Frenchmen had relatives in Africa. Given this general apathy of government, business interests and the public towards colonial affairs, it is easy to understand how the small dedicated group of men in office in Paris were able to dictate the pace of events by careful management.

Trader pressure on government

To what extent were traders in West Africa, or their principals in Europe, able to bring pressure to bear on their governments to take positive action to protect trade? As we saw above, traders did not generally desire government interference, but as conditions in Africa became more unstable, they became less able to solve their problems themselves and more inclined to ask for government help. Because access to the interior was possible in the Niger delta, British traders were able to take steps to secure their interests themselves, with the aid of helpful local consuls, who could commandeer gunboats which could travel up the river. But in other parts of West Africa traders were unable to intervene directly in the interior. Yet the coastal trade was vulnerable to turmoil in the interior, as in the examples of Lagos and Freetown. Merchants and officials called for action here because they said that inter-state conflict was disrupting the flow of goods from the interior to the coast. The concern of the traders was transmitted to authorities at home. Their success depended on the amount of pressure they were able to exercise and the extent to which the politicians were willing to listen. At first the pressure was minimal and, in any case, governments were not enthusiastic about listening.

Attitude of British traders

The recession of the mid-1870s did not result in strong pressure from British mercantile groups for government aid in opening up new markets in Africa or the Far East. Business circles were confident that new outlets could be established without government intervention, and any uneasiness felt about French tariff moves disappeared as the British economy passed through an expansionary phase between 1879 and about 1883. When the economy went into a serious depression between 1883 and 1886 concern for their markets appeared on all sides. It was widely believed that production had outrun demand, that more markets would have to be created to solve the problem. But this no longer seemed so easy to do. For some time the French government had been taking action to secure a monopoly for its traders. The pressure for differential tariffs in West Africa came mainly from French metallurgical, textile and chemical industries. Such tariffs were imposed in Senegal in 1877 and the Ivory Coast in 1889. British fears

that they would be excluded from some of their markets was very real, because in 1880 only 32 per cent of British trade with West Africa was with British possessions. The bulk of its trade was in unclaimed areas or territories under the control of other European powers.

German support for traders

Germany too was showing signs of giving its traders official support. In the 1880s the German government gave more protection to its traders, partly as a result of pressure brought to bear by mercantile interests and partly as a result of a tariff-protection campaign by industrialists. Britain and France feared that German moves might result in their exclusion from unclaimed areas. Tariff increases were threatening, and British chambers of commerce and other trading institutions began looking more and more to the government to take some action on their behalf. They did not want to erect tariff barriers, their main aim was to increase the free trading area, not to exclude others; but as their rivals carved out exclusive trading areas, they began to see, as Hynes says, 'that in the final analysis free trade in Africa would be safeguarded only under some form of British protectorate or colony'.¹²

Merchant pressure

The combined threat of tariff barriers, disruption to trade between the coast and the interior caused by instability inland, and the threat of foreign powers taking over the hinterlands of the coastal trading colonies, led to British merchants (though traditionally suspicious of moves to expand the role of government, which they associated with increased regulations and additional taxes) pressing for a more active policy. What is more, they also displayed an unaccustomed willingness to accept higher taxation in order to pay for action on their behalf. For some time governments took little notice of these pleas. In signing a convention with France in 1889, the British government acquiesced in both Sierra Leone and the Gambia being surrounded by French territory and cut off from their hinterlands. By the early 1890s British business was determined not to let this happen elsewhere, and chambers of commerce backed up the calls of the traders and began to exercise pressure on the government. By this time the government was more inclined to act, not because it wished to protect trade as such, but because it was more aware that instability in the interior could create a situation in which a rival might act and cut off the trade to the coast.

The influence of the men on the spot has often featured prominently in explanations for the partitioning. Although 'these men undoubtedly played a part, and in some cases a very important part, in determining the timing and nature of the partition of West Africa', writes Hopkins, 'their responsibility for causing it was of much the same order as that of the unfortunate Archduke Franz Ferdinand, whose assassination sparked off the First World War. The central problem is to clarify the circumstances which enabled these prominent politicians and soldiers to make a mark on history where others before them, men of similar ambitions, such as Faidherbe and Glover, had been frustrated.'¹³ Why were governments prepared to listen to them at that stage whereas they had earlier taken little notice of them? This is the crux of the matter. At one level, in the days of Faidherbe there was not much international tension about – European powers did not feel sufficiently threatened to move in quickly in response to a move by another. This changed later in the century.

British government action

In the case of Britain, although the British government became more willing to heed the pleas of traders and others it was only because it perceived other, wider interests that it wished to pursue. But generally the British government was loath to assume responsibility itself and between 1886 and 1891 it granted charters to British companies (to Goldie's Royal Niger Company, to William Mackinnon's Imperial British East Africa Company, to Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Company) to administer vast areas at no cost to the government. In the early 1890s it became more willing to take decisive action in the interior. And it was even later, around the mid-1890s, that, under the leadership of Joseph Chamberlain, Britain became the major colonial aggressor.

PRESTIGE, DIPLOMATIC AND STRATEGIC FACTORS

Reasons for annexation

In the final analysis it was the government that sanctioned the annexation of a territory. Why did governments do so? Was it because of economic factors, the pleas of traders or missionaries, or instability in Africa? Were they forced into this position by overzealous army officers in Africa? These all played a part, but in the end the decision was taken in terms of how the government perceived the overall interests of the country. To argue along these lines tends to reduce the force of the economic argument. Although the economic argument is a powerful one, there is a great body of historians who reject economic arguments for the partition of Africa. According to them, what was new about the New Imperialism was that economic considerations took second place to political and strategic motives – the major powers were preoccupied with questions of national security, military power and prestige.

Rivalries in Europe

Although there are major variations in what this group of historians believe, they stress that the partitioning of Africa was the outcome of fears and rivalries in Europe. In the 1950s David Thomson expressed this view in a statement that even in the 1990s is widely accepted. He wrote that 'political and strategic, rather than economic or financial considerations, governed the behaviour of the great powers in the colonial field. Even where strong economic considerations existed ... such considerations were kept entirely subordinate to political and strategic necessities or merely to issues of national prestige and dignity. Apprehensions about national security and the quest for reliable alliances so engaged the attention of the governments of most of the powers that their decisions, whether to pursue active imperialist policies or to moderate their policies of expansion and settle colonial conflicts with other powers, were determined first by political calculations and only secondarily by economic ... Only rarely were the actions of governments directly guided by purely economic motives. International relations were conducted mainly by diplomats of the old school ... Their despatches show very little interest in economic conditions or social forces ... but only a profound absorption in the skilled game of power politics. Enshrouded in suspicions, alert to every sign of subtle shifts in the balance of power, they tirelessly and purposefully pursued the interests of their countries as they understood them; and they understood them almost exclusively in terms of alliances and counteralliances, manoeuvres and bargains, always with the single purpose of enhancing national security and power.'¹⁴

Disraeli's motives

In a short analysis of Benjamin Disraeli, C. C. Eldridge says much the same thing. Earlier we quoted Disraeli's statement in the early 1850s that colonies were millstones about the nation's neck. It has often been said that when Disraeli was later prime minister of England (1874–1880), he abandoned this view and became an ardent imperialist. Eldridge argues, however, that in the 1850s Disraeli was not a bitter opponent of colonies any more than he was a vigorous expansionist in the 1870s. 'He was not interested in colonies as such or in British expansion in the tropics ... He was more interested in the empire as a source of power and prestige. It was the part the possession of empire could play in assisting Great Britain's role in world affairs that concerned him most ... he was solely concerned with utilising the British possessions to increase British power and influence. The empire of England was the visible expression of the power of England in the affairs of the world.'¹⁵

Influence of merchants on policy

Also with regard to Britain, Robinson and Gallagher write that 'Foreign policy was a matter for an *élite*, and they conducted it according to their own view of national interest and world policy.'¹⁶ Austen believes that the balance in favour of taking action in Africa was tilted 'by the influence of the sectors in the European economy which calculated their returns in the form of long-term systematic benefits rather than immediate private profits. The representatives of these sectors were not primarily merchants or manufacturers but, rather, abolitionists, ideologues or public servants.'¹⁷ Austen does not believe that the requests of merchant bodies for government action had any real influence on the government.

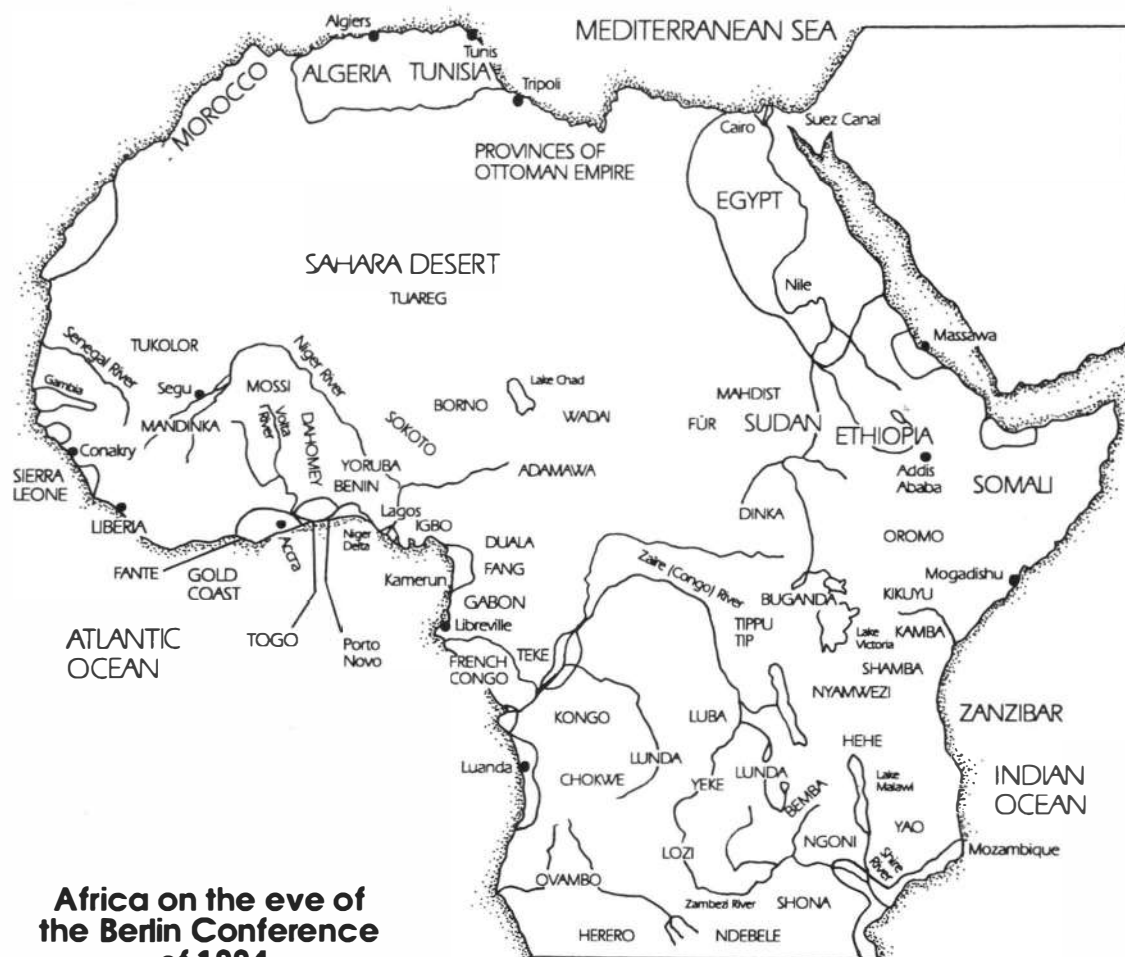
Significance of missionaries

Although the missionaries, who went out to places such as Lagos and Uganda and Nyasaland, played an important part in their annexation, our appreciation of their significance should be tempered by a sober realisation that the British government, for example, was not averse to encouraging the idea that it was taking action on behalf of missionaries or against the slave trade, since it could be sure that action in these worthy causes would be approved by a large number of Britons. But even in Central East Africa, where the missionary influence was strongest and economic arguments weakest, the British government intervened not primarily because of the missionaries but because it saw that other certain national interests could be advanced. Despite the fact that Salisbury would have lost the support of Presbyterians in Scotland had he allowed the missions to come under the Portuguese, he would have let it happen and bought off the Portuguese with this land in return for Portuguese recognition of Mashonaland and Matabeleland as a British sphere, had Rhodes not come along and offered to take over the entire region at no cost to the British taxpayer.

Portugal and prestige

In the case of Portugal, some sort of 'prestige' was obviously very important. The old Portuguese empire meant a lot to many of the ruling Portuguese families; to them the colonies were visible proof of Portuguese initiative and drive, the legacy of a proud tradition that could not simply be swept aside. It was largely a sentimental reaction. The Portuguese aristocrats believed that it was only through colonies that a small nation such as Portugal could ever be great again. So, although the colonies were going through a bad time, it was important to keep them and try to expand them. They had a dream of linking up Mozambique and Angola.

- Italian attitudes to colonies** The same applies to Italy. From the beginning of the partition Italy had set its sights on the creation of an African empire in the tradition of the ancient Roman empire. The site of ancient Carthage in Tunisia had an obvious emotional appeal, but when this was whisked away before Italy's eyes by France in 1881, it focused its sights on Libya and northeast Africa.
- French prestige** Prestige as a factor in the partition of Africa has usually been associated very much with France. It was prestige in 1881–1882 that governed French actions in Madagascar. British operations there did not harm French economic interests, but the way that the British intended organising matters with no reference at all to French 'historic influence', as if the French did not count in the Indian Ocean, angered the French. Prestige was again all-important in Tunisia, where to be ousted by the Italians would have been a great setback to a France struggling with its image after the 1870–1871 defeat. Prestige was also evident in French activity in what became the French Congo. Until Britain reacted to this French acquisition by signing a treaty with Portugal which aimed at cutting the French colony off from the sea, French imperialism on the Congo 'had been little more than an exercise in public relations'.¹⁸ In the case of the French Congo, public opinion was whipped up and public pressure was exerted on the government to act. But this was somewhat of an exception and it was only late in the scramble that public opinion became fired with imperialistic fervour.
- Balance of power** The question of prestige is very much tied up with international rivalry and competition among the great powers in the late nineteenth century. Alignments and the balance of power were so finely poised that even minor changes such as the acquisition of more African territory were likely to elicit a response and a countermove from another European power; even a minor diplomatic setback could be taken to reflect a change in a power's standing in the world. France, battling to keep its major power status, was extremely sensitive about such setbacks, while for the newly united Germany, success outside the traditional political arena of Prussia was very important as an expression of its new-found power. Until the 1880s Britain did not react so badly to minor defeats, but from about 1884, when new and old rivals challenged its ascendancy, it could no longer afford to be so relaxed about its position. By 1898 Britain was so concerned about its credibility as a great power that it was prepared to threaten war in Europe over Fashoda, which was of very little intrinsic worth.
- French fear of British economic expansion** Hopkins believes that the adoption of a policy of imperialism by France in the 1870s was due to a realisation that it was falling further and further behind Britain as far as economic progress and global influence were concerned. Not only was this gap growing instead of decreasing, but in Europe German industrial and military growth was leaving France behind. France had been ousted by Britain time and again. It was defeated in 1815, a defeat which played a large role in retarding its economic development in the nineteenth century. 'Since the victors of Waterloo then pressed the French into declaring the slave trade illegal, it is not surprising that France viewed abolition as the final move in a British plot to destroy what was left of her Atlantic commerce. Any illusions that France had recovered her former power by the middle of the nineteenth century, at least in Europe, were shattered by the defeat which she suffered at the hands



of Germany in 1870.¹⁹ The basis, then, for French imperialism in the late nineteenth century was fear that its ambitions would once again be frustrated by British economic expansion, led by Manchester textiles.

When in 1884 Goldie bought out two French companies that were trading on the Niger delta, this was the final proof, if any were needed, that France was not going to be able to make any inroads on British supremacy by engaging in commercial activity. Political and military activity became the watchwords.

Congress of Berlin There is no shortage of theories about why France entered the partition scene. Most of them have to do with prestige or diplomacy. The question of international rivalry is bound up with the issue of the balance of power. F. H. Hinsley takes the Congress of Berlin in 1878 as an important point of departure in this argument, when Russian and British rivalries in the Balkans and the Ottoman empire brought Europe to the brink of war. They averted that crisis, but after that they played out their power politics not in Europe but in Africa and Asia. Conflicting interests in Africa threatened European peace and forced them to carve up Africa in order to keep the European peace.²⁰

French diplomatic position Sanderson spells out the significance of the Congress of Berlin in more precise terms. Historians have said that it was Britain's overwhelming strength in the first half of the century that deterred other powers from challenging it in Africa. Sanderson implies, however, that British success in deterring France from making advances in Africa in the first three quarters of the century was not only because of British economic predominance, and that one of the reasons why it was able to do so was that France did not have the diplomatic support of any European powers. It stood alone against Britain. Had it enjoyed the support of another power the coastal partition of Africa probably would have occurred much earlier.

France as key to balance of power Sanderson develops this theme by saying that the French diplomatic position changed dramatically in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin. France suddenly became the key to the balance of power in the Near East. In the aftermath of the Turkish defeat at the hands of Russia in 1877–1878 France's refusal to align itself with Russia meant that Austria and Britain were able to halt Russian ambitions in the Balkans without calling upon the help of Germany. Bismarck was very grateful for this. It meant he did not have to choose between denying support for Austria and openly confronting Russia. So Bismarck and Britain both courted France, and encouraged it to take Tunisia. But France's transformation went beyond this. It remained the key so long as Russia continued to have ambitions in the Balkans and the Levant. Salisbury reacted to this new situation by restraining any British activity in Africa that might annoy France.²¹ France's diplomatic position was further strengthened in 1884 when Bismarck encouraged French adventures in Africa in order to further his own plans.

Doctrine of paramountcy France had a motive to upset the status quo in West Africa, and it had room to manoeuvre because Britain was in a vulnerable position. In many areas where Britain had not established formal control but was the only power with influence, it was becoming more eager to assert a sort of quasi-legal right as 'paramount power' to stop others from carving out spheres of influence. This paramountcy seems to have origin-

ated in West Africa where it was a useful device for temporarily extending and applying control, without having to go so far as to assume the burden of formal empire. Paramountcy was used in the Niger delta, where Britain had no formal possessions, but was backed by the availability of armed force. In 1875–1876 Lord Carnarvon hoped that the French would recognise British paramountcy along the entire West African coastline from Morocco to Gabon, with the exception of Senegal. As early as 1876 Carnarvon wanted a Monroe Doctrine to apply to East and Central Africa as well. Originally this paramountcy was asserted in areas where there were no other powers involved, but later it also became a doctrine to keep other powers from establishing spheres of their own. If paramountcy had been established, no other power had the right to intrude there. As originally envisaged paramountcy applied to the coast, but it was not long before some British policy-makers were ready to extend the idea of paramountcy to vast areas of the interior, where no European power at all had any influence.²²

Britain's vulnerability British commercial supremacy had been so unquestioned that there seemed no point in taking over unannexed areas. The result was that Britain made no attempt to formalise this informal empire – had it done so France would have been in danger of being permanently confined to Algeria and Senegal. There were thus many areas over which the exercise of power was informal. This made Britain particularly vulnerable. Its great strength was in fact a potential weakness!

Emergent role of Germany Austen too sees the partition as being linked to the relative status of the powers, and he focuses in particular on Germany. The diplomacy of the partition must be seen in the context of European developments, in particular the unification of Germany. 'Pervading the minds of even the most lofty diplomatists were powerful, if demonstrably unrealistic, anxieties concerning the links between great-power status and economic imperialism. The new powers, both Germany and Italy, identified the earlier economic ascendancy of Britain with the substance of empire rather than the ideology of free trade. The older powers, Britain, France, and most anxiously of all, Portugal, saw themselves humiliated or, at the very least, overshadowed by the emergent role not only of Germany but also the massive United States and Russia. African colonies represented a surviving economic asset which, if not critical in the glories of the past, might now be expanded to assure meaningful status in the future. Within this general context of intense and multi-faceted international competition, the economic rationale behind African colonization was to a considerable extent pre-emptive – designed to assure access to potential rather than actual markets and commodities, as well as trade routes to the always larger prize of Asia.'²³

Others too have seen Germany as important. The partition began as a contest between Britain and France, and by the late 1870s there was no other discernible pattern that could have been expected. At first it was only the British and French in Africa, besides the moribund Portuguese. By the 1870s King Leopold of Belgium was busy carving out a sphere of influence in the centre of the continent, but his ability actually to create a state here ruled by himself, seemed hardly likely until Bismarck suddenly took an interest in African affairs around 1883. It was Bismarck who finally destroyed the comfortable informal empire that Britain had relied upon to keep rivals out. In explain-

ing Bismarck's interest one has to return to Europe and see how the Iron Chancellor hoped to further his plans for a European balance of power by encouraging France to oppose Britain and also to help put an end to British pretensions to exclude others from Africa by the exercise of 'paramountcy'. Prestige was also a factor in Bismarck's actions, which were in part a response to the arrogant and indifferent manner in which Britain treated his actions in Angra Pequena, which was economically of very little worth.²⁴

Collapse of British ascendancy

Sanderson stresses that the basic fact to remember is that 'None of these motives, and no combination of them, could have generated a general multi-power partition of Africa if the British had continued successfully to deter other powers from encroaching upon their informal African empire. The collapse of British hegemony is the great negative factor which alone enabled the "positive" motivations of other powers to achieve practical results.'²⁵

Interweaving of factors

We started this chapter by hinting at the complexity of the concept of the New Imperialism and the reasons for the partition of Africa. The following quotation from C. C. Eldridge which confirms the many-sided nature of the partitioning is a fitting end to the chapter. He writes that: 'Commercial rivalry, internal crises and power vacuums in existing colonies and spheres of influence, and local friction between individual powers on the periphery of empire explain much, especially when seen as the culmination of relations over a longer period.' But he nevertheless believes that it is 'in Europe that the impulses for expansion must primarily be sought: European political and commercial rivalry electrified the atmosphere and led to large-scale partition. And in Europe, political and economic motives, in varying degree, dominated the policies of most European powers. Only towards the end of the century did "emotional" factors become important when imperialism became (or was made) a popular creed with the masses. In general, the economic motive entered everybody's calculations but it was frequently subordinated to considerations of power politics, prestige, strategy or even the overwhelming demands for intervention from the periphery.'²⁶

Notes

- 1 J. Lonsdale, 'The European scramble and conquest in African history', in R. Oliver & G. N. Sanderson (eds), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 6, *From 1870 to 1905*, p. 681.
- 2 L. H. Gann, 'Reflections on imperialism and the scramble for Africa', in L. H. Gann & P. Duignan (eds), *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960*, vol. 1, pp. 127-128.
- 3 B. M. Ratcliffe, 'The economics of the partition of Africa: Methods and recent research trends', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 15, 1981, p. 18.
- 4 Gann, 'Reflections on imperialism', p. 114.
- 5 R. A. Austen, *African economic history: Internal development and external dependency*, p. 112.
- 6 See A. G. Hopkins, 'African economic history: The first twenty-five years' (Review article), *Journal of African History*, 30, 1989, pp. 157-163.
- 7 Austen, *African economic history*, p. 113.
- 8 D. K. Fieldhouse, *Economics and empire 1830-1914*, p. 476.

- 9 Quoted by R. Robinson & J. Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: The official mind of imperialism*, p. 224.
- 10 C. M. Andrew & A. S. Kanya-Forstner, *France overseas: The Great War and the climax of French imperial expansion*, pp. 12–13.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- 12 W. G. Hynes, *The economics of empire: Britain, Africa and the New Imperialism 1870–95*, p. 57.
- 13 A. G. Hopkins, *An economic history of West Africa*, p. 164.
- 14 D. Thomson, *Europe since Napoleon*, pp. 494, 522–523.
- 15 C. C. Eldridge, *Victorian imperialism*, pp. 104–105.
- 16 Robinson & Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, p. 378.
- 17 Austen, *African economic history*, p. 114.
- 18 G. N. Sanderson, 'The European partition of Africa: Origins and dynamics', in *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 6, p. 139.
- 19 Hopkins, *African economic history*, p. 158.
- 20 G. N. Ozoigwe, 'European partition and conquest of Africa: An overview', in A. A. Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. 7, *Africa under colonial domination, 1880–1935*, p. 24.
- 21 Sanderson, 'The European partition', pp. 121–122.
- 22 *Ibid.*, pp. 119–120.
- 23 Austen, *African economic history*, p. 116.
- 24 Sanderson, 'The European partition', p. 138.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 116.
- 26 Eldridge, *Victorian imperialism*, p. 145.



Triggers and early moves: the partition to 1889

WHO OR WHAT STARTED THE SCRAMBLE?

**Activa-
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scram-
ble**

Virtually all the 'triggers' that have been advanced as the starting point for the scramble deal with either West Africa, or Egypt or the Congo. It is generally agreed that the scramble for Africa started some time between 1879 and 1882. Diplomatic historians have isolated a number of different triggers, and there has been much debate and disagreement about which trigger set off the scramble. It is a debate that many African historians avoid as being of little importance. They say that what is important is that around 1880 European powers began to establish formal colonies in areas where they had hitherto had informal spheres of influence. Curtin *et al.* write as follows: 'One can argue over which was first or most important, but in fact a number of triggers were pulled nearly simultaneously in different parts of the continent. If one or another of these had never existed, the others would have done the job.'¹ This is probably true, but the actual sequence of the scramble has much to do with *what* European powers obtained *which* colonies, and is thus an important determinant of the final shape of colonial Africa. Without some knowledge of the European diplomacy behind the scramble, the actual pattern of colonial Africa is unintelligible. Even the shape of

postcolonial Africa requires an understanding of the type of colonial states from which it emerged.

Jauréguiberry and Freycinet: the French 'trigger'

Senegal Senegal was the base for French colonial expansion in Africa. By 1880 St Louis, the capital, was a town of over 16 000 people, many of whom had come strongly under the influence of French culture; other important establishments were Gorée and Dakar. Although there are a number of explanations for the starting point of the scramble, the decision in 1879 by the French to build a railway line from Dakar to link Senegal with the upper Niger valley, and so monopolise the trans-Saharan trade as well as that of the savanna regions of West Africa, is widely regarded as the beginning of the formal partition of Africa.

Freycinet and Jauréguiberry By 1880 Louis-Alexandre Brière de l'Isle, who had been governor since 1876, had consolidated and extended French control and was preparing the way for an advance to the upper Niger. He was fortunate in that there was now an influential group of men in high positions in government circles who believed that French prestige could be regained by expanding in Africa. The two most important men in this respect were Charles de Freycinet, a great railway enthusiast, who was Minister of Public Works until December 1879 when he became prime minister, and Admiral Jean Jauréguiberry, a former governor of Senegal, who was head of the Ministry of Marine and Colonies from February 1879.

Architects of policy 'Freycinet and Jauréguiberry, not the geographical societies or the explorers,' write Newbury and Kanya-Forstner, 'were the true architects of the new African policy. The two men were intimate friends and close political allies. They shared a common belief in the Sudan's economic potential and a common determination to exploit it for their nation's benefit. They were convinced that the race for Africa had begun, and that the state, with all the resources at its command, had to make the running.'² It was only in 1895 that Britain came to the same conclusion when Joseph Chamberlain determined to make the state the instrument of expansion.

Political empire through military force Freycinet thought more in terms of opening up an informal commercial empire, but Jauréguiberry regarded the railway not primarily as a means of opening up fresh areas to French trade, but as a way of extending French political influence; he wanted to create a political empire and to do this he would use military force. Newbury and Kanya-Forstner believe that 'ultimately, the motives for French expansion are to be found within the policy-making framework itself, within the "official mind" of French imperialism. What transformed French policy after 1879 was a change in official thinking on the vital questions of cost and military effort. Freycinet and Jauréguiberry were the ones who broke with the tradition of limited government intervention in African affairs. Alarmed by the imagined threat of foreign competition, they made the state the principal agent of African expansion. Convinced of Africa's legendary wealth, they invested public funds in its future profitability. Discarding the old notion of informal empire, they made political control the basis for economic development, and

they set out to win their empire by military means. This last was the crucial decision.' These two authors write that 'the beginnings of British imperialism in West Africa may have been a consequence of the partition; the beginnings of French imperialism were its cause'.³

Borgnis-Desbordes and military control

In 1880 Jauréguiberry created a special military command in Senegal, giving this post to Gustav Borgnis-Desbordes, a ruthless military man with a burning desire to extend the French empire. Desbordes spearheaded a French drive towards the upper Niger. Railway enthusiasts spoke dreamily of a railway line that would cross the Sahara, and of one that would connect St Louis with the Niger and so enable French traders to draw a large part of the trade of the Niger basin to St Louis. The expansionists used this enthusiasm to obtain money from parliament. It was clear that there could be no railway line until the area between the Senegal and Niger rivers was firmly under French control. The money obtained for a railway survey was thus used to recruit a military force in Africa and to pay for the construction of forts along the line of conquest. Although little progress was made on the line, progress towards the upper Niger was significant. Although Freycinet and Jauréguiberry fell from power in September 1880, Desbordes paid scant attention to orders to undertake no military expeditions apart from such punitive measures as were necessary to secure existing French stations. He was the government's main source of information on what was happening in the interior and it was not difficult to portray a further advance as a defensive measure to retain existing interests.

Occupation of Bamako

In January 1882 Freycinet was back in power, and Jauréguiberry returned to the Ministry of Marine in February. These two men wanted to stretch the French reach to the upper Niger, which they could do from Senegal without infringing on the British dominance on the Niger coast. So the movement here was not an open anti-British move, which in 1879 would not have been welcomed at the Quai d'Orsay.⁴ Jauréguiberry authorised the occupation of Bamako on the upper Niger and this was accomplished in February 1883. Although no money was available for a further advance at this stage, and Jauréguiberry resigned in 1883 so that his active support was no longer there, Bamako was well placed for future attacks on the Tukolor empire of Ahmadu, on Samory's empire south and east of Bamako, and on the new religious empire being carved out between the Senegal and Gambia rivers by Mahmadu Lamine. The expansionists had plans to conquer all of these states, and had already done much to undermine Ahmadu on their way to the Niger, but for the moment they remained at peace, until resources could be spared for a major onslaught on these empires.

Protectorate at Porto Novo

Like many other French naval officers, Jauréguiberry was combative towards England. In April 1883 he established a formal French protectorate at Porto Novo, an area west of Lagos in which there was much competition. France had originally established a presence there in 1863 but this had been allowed to lapse. He had plans too for the extension of this protectorate further westwards, and for the Niger delta, the Benue River and in Cameroon. Since early 1881 the Quai had become increasingly combative towards Britain and they stood solidly behind him. The protectorate over Porto Novo was particularly significant because this lay between the Gold Coast and Lagos, and

from time to time Britain had discussed with the French the possibility of taking this over so that it would have a long uninterrupted stretch of coast under its authority.

Madagascar becomes a French protectorate

The French challenge to Britain in Madagascar may be seen as part of the new French initiative that was started in 1879–1880. Since the 1860s the French had allowed the British a fairly free hand in increasing their influence over the Merina dynasty, although the French sugar planters on Réunion wanted the French government to become more involved because they saw that Madagascar had potential as a food and labour source. But in July 1881, when Britain encouraged the Merina to extend and consolidate their rule, Paris saw this as an attempt to oust the French from Madagascar. In January 1882 the French decided to act positively on the island and the aggressive Auguste Baudais was appointed to the island. He engineered a quarrel with the Merina and broke off relations with them. A Merina delegation to Paris met with no success with a French government that had decided to take control of the island. They found no support in London either. In February 1883 French naval action against Madagascar was begun, and in December 1885 the Merina accepted a French protectorate.

So, in terms of the theory that makes France the initiator of the era of formal empire, it would seem that French action from 1879 onwards started the scramble for Africa. In these early French initiatives one may also include the French occupation of Tunisia in 1881, which is not normally considered part of the scramble for Africa, as French action was encouraged by Britain and German, so there was no competition, except, of course, from Italy, who had coveted it.

The Egyptian ‘trigger’

Robinson and Gallagher

Not all historians agree that it was France that started the partition. They argue that French expansion in the Senegal region was going on very much despite official French government policy, and that by 1882 there had been no official French decision to undertake a programme of formal control. What did change the French attitude was the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. Robinson and Gallagher in *Africa and the Victorians*, published in 1961, cited the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 as the start of the scramble for Africa.⁵ Over the years this theory has been hotly debated, and although there is by no means agreement on the issue, the balance of informed opinion is that while the occupation may explain British participation in the scramble, it cannot be used as an explanation for the entire scramble. On the other hand, there is little doubt that it did heighten international tensions and rivalry.

Britain occupies Egypt

Basically the argument in favour of Egypt stems from the nature of the British occupation of that country in 1882. In chapter 5 we left Egypt in the hands of Urabi Pasha. Britain and France planned joint action to remove Urabi and put the Anglo-French puppet Tewfik back on the throne and thereby secure Europe’s financial investments in the country. At the time there were Muslim revolts in Algeria and Tunisia, both under French control, and the French prime minister, Gambetta, saw a link between this and Urabi’s revolt, believing that it was all part of a Pan-Islamic conspiracy. The British would have preferred the Ottoman sultan, as the nominal suzerain of Egypt, to take

direct control. France was against this as it believed this would be a bad precedent and might have repercussions on its position in Algeria and Tunisia. So the two powers planned a joint naval demonstration which it was hoped would give courage to the khedive's supporters and daunt those of Urabi. But at the last moment, there was a domestic political crisis in France, and France withdrew from the planned attack. The British, having bombarded Alexandria on 11 July 1882, now found themselves committed to further action. Instead of bringing the Egyptian rebels to heel, the bombardment served rather to fan the flames of anti-European feeling in the country, and a British force under Sir Garnet Wolsely was sent to restore order. Urabi's army was overwhelmed at the battle of Tel-el-Kebir and Britain became the sole occupier of Egypt.

Re-examination of Urabi's position

In terms of the scenario put forward by historians for many years, the reasons why Europe took action against Urabi were that he was threatening to repudiate the national debt, and that the revolution which he headed was responsible for the country sliding into chaos, which endangered the Suez Canal as well as the foreign investments. Historians have also insisted that it was France rather than Britain that had been in the forefront of steps to interfere in Egyptian affairs. They have also put forward the view that Britain in 1882 was a most reluctant occupier of Egypt.

These assumptions have not gone unchallenged and from time to time historians have expressed reservations about one or other of the above conclusions. Hopkins, in a 1986 reassessment of the 1882 occupation of Egypt, has given us reason to question some of the above premises.⁶ In the first place, he says, the military protests from February 1879 were not aimed at establishing a new revolutionary government. 'Even when Urabi emerged as the leading figure in Egyptian politics in February 1882, his actions were consistent with his pronouncements that he was loyal to the khedive and to the sultan, and that he intended neither to eliminate European influences or to renege on the interest payments due on Egypt's debts. Furthermore, "law and order" were maintained until June, when rioting occurred in Alexandria.' Even these disturbances, which contemporaries portrayed as being horrific and which served as a justification for European intervention, 'were less serious than has long been supposed', says Hopkins, 'and they were probably spontaneous. If there was premeditation, the prime suspect has to be Tewfiq, Britain's pliable puppet, who had an interest in discrediting Urabi in order to bolster his own position. Urabi himself heard of the disturbances late in the day, and moved quickly to quell them.' In other words, Egypt was not 'sliding into anarchy'.⁷

Europe's dilemma

Hopkins goes further and says that the perception that chaos reigned was not simply the result of a misreading of the situation by Europe – it was an impression that was being deliberately created. Hopkins explains it thus: 'This happened because the Europeans faced a dilemma which in the end could be resolved only by intervention. They wanted a government which was both stable and co-operative. A stable government was one with a solid domestic power-base; but the stronger its local support the greater its ability to resist or qualify external demands. The more pliable the regime, the weaker its domestic power-base; the government would obey orders but could not implement them without arousing opposition. Hence a paradox emerged: strong governments

were reported for non-compliance, which was equated with the erosion of orderly rule; pliable governments were given warm approval but ultimately could not sustain the stability they were said to represent.⁸

Urabi a threat to Europe What specifically alarmed European government agents and business interests in September 1881 was that a new and stable government had emerged in Egypt and had a reform program that included a reduction in the number of highly paid European officials and the curbing of the operations of certain categories of foreigners. 'Since disorder was defined as allowing Egyptians a greater say in running their own country, it was not surprising that scare stories multiplied in number and intensity. It was not anarchy that drew the Europeans into Egypt, but the European presence which made the formula for maintaining stability increasingly complex and represented opposition as anarchy.'⁹

Suez Canal as rationale for invasion Where the canal is concerned it does not appear that many British officials in high places thought that the events in Egypt in 1882 were endangering its security. Until the 1890s the Admiralty based its strategy on the Cape route. Even the shippers, who preferred the canal, did not appear to regard it as being under threat. It was only in July 1882, with disturbances in Egypt, that the security of the canal became an issue. 'Evidence from different sources,' Hopkins writes, 'points clearly to the conclusion that the Canal was promoted late in the day to justify a forward policy. It was a device to provide a rationale for action by suggesting that free trade and international communications were in peril. In this way the invasion of Egypt could be presented favourably in Britain and made palatable to Cobdenite Liberals and to Gladstone in particular ... Cause and effect need to be reversed: it was the bombardment of Alexandria which created a threat to the Canal, not a threat to the Canal which made bombardment necessary.'¹⁰

The issue of French pressure On the question of France dragging Britain into Egypt, Hopkins also believes that this is not true, that French action in Tunisia in May 1881 resulted in a far heavier involvement here than had initially been anticipated, so that the French government approached the issue of intervention in Egypt very cautiously. Although France may have been more assertive early on in the crisis, it certainly was not so at the end.

British economic interests as reason for invasion 'The only remaining possibility,' Hopkins believes, 'is the one which *Africa and the Victorians* is most concerned to deny, namely that Britain was largely responsible for her own actions and that these were much more combative and calculated than Robinson and Gallagher's reading of the evidence indicates.' He concludes that British intervention came 'from the conscious and sustained defence of Britain's expanding economic interests in Egypt'. These interests had expanded rapidly, and there were close ties between financial interests in the City and politicians in Whitehall, ties which were often rooted in friendships and marriage. Of course, this pressure to safeguard British economic interests was not the only one with which politicians had to deal, but statesmen knew the importance of expanding the British role in the international economy; they appreciated the significance of overseas trade in the balance of payments. 'It remained only to make the occupation palatable to parliament and the public,' Hopkins writes. 'This was achieved by emphasizing the national interest rather

than by referring to specific business and financial concerns, and by stressing the spurious danger to the Canal and to the freedom of the seas, the duty of defending British lives and property, and the need to uphold Christianity in the face of militant Islam.¹¹

British intentions in Egypt

Although Britain became the effective ruler of Egypt, the khedive remained at the head of affairs, albeit as a figurehead. Egypt remained a possession of the Ottoman empire under British protection. The main reason for this was that the British did not intend taking permanent control of Egypt; they believed that their stay would be temporary. As soon as law and order was restored they would withdraw. The last thing that Gladstone wanted to do was to add a colony to the British empire. But in the end Britain did not withdraw, although between 1882 and 1922 it made 66 official declarations of its intent to do so.

Beginning of scramble for Africa

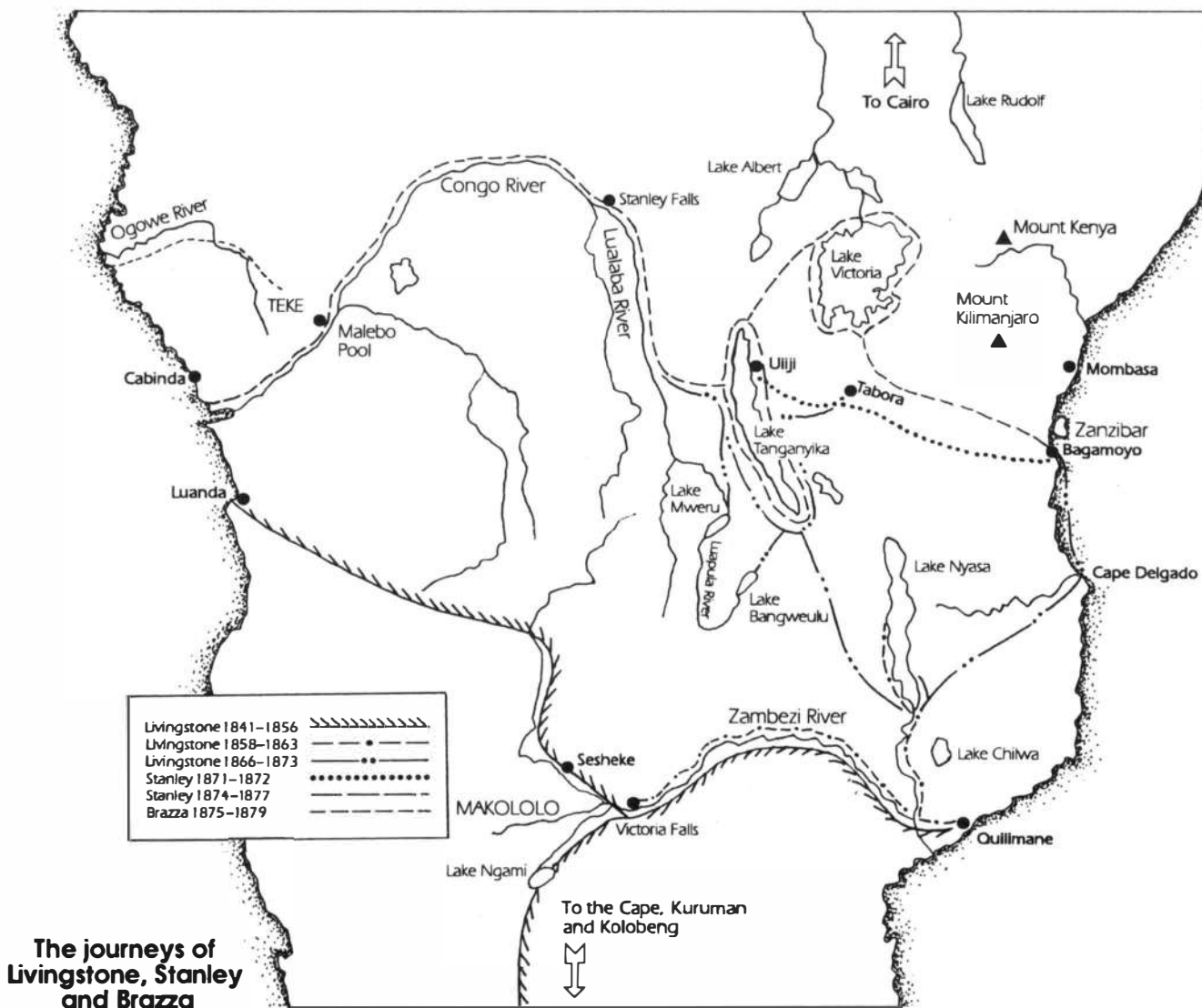
According to Robinson and Gallagher, the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 was the start of the scramble for Africa, because France, annoyed at being ousted from Egypt, now embarked on an aggressive expansion policy in West Africa and so unleashed a train of events that led to the parcelling out of Africa among the European powers.

Leopold and Stanley

In order to place this in perspective we must focus on Leopold and Stanley and also on the activities of Savorgnan de Brazza. In 1876 Leopold was taking steps that would eventually result in him obtaining the Congo as a personal fief. Some historians have credited him with thinking in terms of a colony in the Congo even at this early stage. It seems more likely that, although he might have had some vague political plans, what he really wanted was to organise the commercial exploitation of the region. Stanley had demonstrated that above the cataracts there was a vast stretch of navigable water from Stanley Pool (Malebo Pool). The British, who were doing very well with their coastal trade between Cameroon and the Congo mouth, did not feel the need to go into the interior, but Leopold saw the commercial possibilities, and in 1879 Stanley went back as Leopold's agent to explore the trading possibilities and set up bases. He opened up communications from Stanley Falls (Kisangani) to Stanley Pool, and between 1879 and 1884 he made treaties with some 400 chiefs in which the sovereignty of the International African Association was recognised.

Brazza

At this stage Brazza enters the scene. Despite having been born in Rome in 1852, Brazza was an ardent French nationalist and believed very much in France's civilising mission. Between 1875 and 1878 he discovered a route from the coast along the Ogowe River to Stanley Pool which was much simpler and easier than the one pioneered by Stanley. Back in Europe in 1878 Brazza heard that Stanley was about to return to Africa, this time in the employ of King Leopold. Brazza decided to return to Africa and, although he succeeded in obtaining a small grant from the French government, his return was undertaken in the name of the French branch of the International African Association. So there was no deliberate French plan to expand here, and nothing might have come of his journeys had it not been for Leopold's activity in the Congo.



Treaty with Bateke

In 1880 Brazza went overland from Gabon and towards the end of the year he concluded a treaty with Makoko of the Teke on the northern banks of Stanley Pool, in which the chief ceded his territory to France. The treaty was signed where Brazzaville was later established; it was well inland and it was separated from existing French interests in Gabon. He returned to France in 1882. When Leopold heard of this treaty he took immediate steps to acquire sovereignty over the Congo basin. It is because Brazza's treaty spurred Leopold to take decisive action to obtain control of the area to the south of the Congo River that certain historians have regarded the Teke-Brazza treaty as the starting point of the scramble, the 'trigger' that began it all.

Reaction to Teke-Brazza treaty

But Brazza had not gone to Africa as the agent of the French government, and the government at first wanted nothing to do with the treaty. Brazza's reception in official circles was decidedly lukewarm. Jauréguiberry regarded the treaty as a completely unauthorised piece of diplomacy by a man who was an agent of the International African Association, which was closely linked to Leopold. He was against submitting the treaty to parliament for ratification. Jauréguiberry had his own strategy for furthering the French empire in Africa and this did not include taking sovereignty over the northern banks of the Congo River. Jauréguiberry disapproved of Brazza's activities, because they were distractions from his own priority areas. Leopold, who had set his sights on the whole of the Congo basin, approached prominent people to use their influence to see that the treaty was not ratified. The Teke lands were just above the Congo rapids, at the end of the navigable part of the river. Leopold was afraid that French control here might isolate his stations in the interior from the coast.

Brazza treaty ratified

But Brazza had invested too much in the project to give up so easily, and he made a direct appeal to the French public, writing in the press of the wonderful economic potential of the region, suggesting that it would be disgraceful and damaging to national prestige to give up something that had been won for France in a race against Stanley. Public opinion, usually notoriously apathetic towards Africa, was stirred by the appeal to national prestige, and many voices were raised in favour of the ratification of the treaty. Public pressure on the French government mounted, and on 30 November 1882 the treaty was ratified, thus laying the foundations for the French Congo (Congo-Brazzaville). It was ratified because it cost little politically against the lightweight Association of Leopold's, and it gave a safe and popular success after the depressing events in Cairo.¹²

Link between Brazza treaty and Egypt

Many historians have focused attention on the Brazza treaty as the start of the partitioning of Africa. Robinson and Gallagher, who maintain that it was the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 that set off the scramble, cite the Brazza treaty in support of their view. They attach much significance to the fact that the treaty was ratified only a few months after the British occupation of Egypt, and suggest that this was an aggressive reaction by France to being ousted from Egypt by Britain. Although France could have joined Britain in the occupation of Egypt, it was annoyed by the unilateral British action and the failure of the British to withdraw immediately. The British occupation of Egypt did not really harm the French position in the balance of power stakes in the Mediterranean.

What France was so upset about was being pushed out of an area where it had been dominant. So here we have prestige very much to the fore.

Robinson and Gallagher believe that in ratifying the treaty France was signalling a new policy in West Africa, in which it would no longer be so sensitive about treading on British toes in this part of the world, a change from the informal understanding they had had not to interfere in one another's spheres of influence. Those who hold this view say that prior to 1882 British and French traders operated quite happily without the intervention of their governments. The French sphere of influence was Senegal and the western Sudan, while the British were predominant in the region of the lower Niger. Before 1882 France gave no support or encouragement to French traders in their attempts to establish themselves in the British trading sphere. But after 1882 this changed. The ratification of the Brazza treaty, so it is said, marked this altered situation. It spurred Leopold to take steps to assume formal control over the southern banks of the Congo River, thus forcing Britain and France into further action to formalise control over their informal spheres.

**French
res-
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to Brit-
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Egypt**

But the weight of opinion is that it was not the occupation of Egypt that resulted in the Makoko treaty being ratified. Hopkins denies that the French were initially annoyed at the British occupation of Egypt. In 1882 they congratulated the British on their action 'because it appeared to safeguard rather than imperil French business and personnel'.¹³ France was at the time heavily engaged in Tunisia, Algeria and Indochina, and Hopkins says that it was only in 1885 that they could give Egypt their full attention. Sanderson agrees that French anger did not date from 1882. He maintains that, for close on two years after the British occupation of Egypt in September 1882, the French continued to believe that Britain would restore joint financial control in Egypt and so they did not obstruct Britain in Egypt; in fact they cooperated with it. So France did not act in anger over Egypt in 1882. He agrees with those who see French action as beginning some 18 months before the Egyptian crisis of 1882, especially in West Africa and Madagascar. Bitterness about Egypt came to the fore only with the collapse of Anglo-French negotiations on Egyptian finance in the middle of 1884. French moves before that were not prompted by a desire to get back at Britain over Egypt. He does not believe that the Egyptian crisis affected the partition of West Africa until at least 1894. The most rapid French advance in West Africa occurred between 1879 and 1883 when there was no serious rift with Britain. When the issue began to arouse great bitterness in 1884–1885, there was a pause in the advance, and when the advance continued in 1889–1890 its focus was the establishment of a large empire around Lake Chad, and this objective distracted the French from the Nile valley until 1894.¹⁴

**Brazza
treaty
as start
of parti-
tioning**

But even divorced from the Egyptian issue, there are those who still maintain that the Brazza treaty was the 'trigger' for the scramble. Jean Stengers thus argues that the Brazza treaty would have been ratified even if there had been no crisis in Egypt. He does admit, however, that the hurt of the Egyptian issue may well have made the French public more receptive to any scheme that seemed likely to compensate them for the loss of Egypt.¹⁵

Egyptocentric thesis refuted

The Egyptian explanation has come under attack from many quarters. 'It will not do,' writes Paul Kennedy, 'to make the Egyptian crisis the sole or even the chief cause of the European "scramble for Africa". The reasons for that phenomenon had long been developing, and lay in the altering relationships (especially the economic and power relationships) between Europe and the tropical world.' Kennedy argues that by the time Britain occupied Egypt in 1882, the British were expanding in South Africa, the French along the Senegal and in Tunisia, Leopold was already eyeing the Congo – in short, that the scramble had started and was gaining momentum. Kennedy does agree that Egypt was important in the further course of the partitioning. 'What the British entry into Egypt and failure to withdraw from there did do, however, was to open up a new zone of rivalry and to make impossible any earlier hopes of an agreed Anglo-French supervision of the colonial scramble.'¹⁶

France as instigator of scramble

Newbury and Kanya-Forstner also take issue with the Egyptocentric thesis, although agreeing that the Egyptian crisis might have led the French to adopt more openly anti-British policies and that Brazza's campaign to whip up public feeling may have been the more successful because of it. They agree with Stengers that it was France who set off the scramble for Africa, but as we have seen, they maintain that the vital decision to expand had been taken as far back as 1879–1880, long before the Egyptian crisis or the Brazza treaty. This theory enjoys widespread support. They say that despite Jauréguiberry's initial unenthusiastic attitude towards the treaty, 'Parliament ratified the De Brazza treaty because it gave France another route into the vast and wealthy lands of the West African interior'.¹⁷ In other words, they see it as of a piece with the new policy indicated in 1879–1880 by Jauréguiberry and Freycinet – the ratification of the Brazza treaty was merely a continuation of that policy, it was not the beginning of a new policy.

Anglo-French rivalry on the Niger River

The 1883 initiatives on the lower Niger and Benue were likewise a continuation of that policy. The British were dominant in the Niger River delta and by 1871 there were between 20 and 30 British firms trading in this areas from hulks moored on the river. In 1879 George Goldie succeeded in putting an end to disruptive competition among British firms trading in the region and formed the United African Company. But there were still French firms along the river; in September 1882 the agent-general of the Compagnie française de l'Afrique équatoriale, Mattei, signed a commercial treaty with a chief on the Benue River.

The British were too strongly entrenched to the west of the Niger to be challenged with much success, but Jauréguiberry felt that there was a good chance of France being able to secure a foothold on the east banks of the river and on the Benue. In January 1883 Jauréguiberry called on the French parliament to ratify the commercial treaty, and he issued instructions for the commander of the South Atlantic Naval Division to make treaties with chiefs in the delta. Late in 1883 Mattei was sent to the Niger and Benue to sign treaties, and French gunboats cruised around the Bight of Benin.

French plans for vast empire

This sudden initiative was part of Jauréguiberry's designs for the creation of a huge French West African empire. The treaties with the delta chiefs were not aimed at simply giving France a commercial foothold, but were intended to provide an outlet to the sea in this area. It was a step in the fulfilment of Jauréguiberry's plan for opening up the

road for France to Lake Chad, Adamwa and Borno. Of course, say Newbury and Kanya-Forstner, he did not expect that the African empire would be created in a few short years – it was a long-term goal, but it was part of the same initiative that saw him appoint Desbordes to push French expansion in the western and central Sudan; he hoped to be able to advance into the interior from the lower Niger and Benue and eventually link up with the drive from Senegal. Jauréguiberry was not able to follow up on these initiatives. When he made them he knew that he was about to resign from the French cabinet. He thus had to move quickly, and his instructions to the commander of the South Atlantic Naval Division were signed two days after his resignation from the cabinet.¹⁸

Oil Rivers Protectorate

When he heard that French warships were in the vicinity of the delta and that the French were making treaties, Percy Anderson of the Foreign Office wrote as follows in June 1883: 'British trade will have no chance of existence except at the mercy of French officials.' To avoid this a British protectorate would have to be established at the mouth of the Niger. 'Protectorates are unwelcome burdens,' Anderson wrote, 'but in this case it is ... a question between British protectorates, which would be unwelcome, and French protectorates, which would be fatal.'¹⁹ Anderson saw the choice that was being forced on Britain a good deal sooner than most British policy-makers. Nothing came of this French policy; the French did not succeed in establishing a presence on the eastern delta or the Benue. However, the French activity, and the proclamation in 1883 of a French protectorate over Porto Novo, resulted in British consul Hewett in November 1883 being given instructions to make treaties with the coastal states and establish protectorates. This resulted in the proclamation of the Oil Rivers Protectorate. Anglo-French fear and suspicion played a major role here. It was fear of British action on the coast opposite Lagos that made France proclaim a protectorate over Porto Novo, but that protectorate in turn made the British fear that France was about to take aggressive expansionist steps in West Africa. Britain had no intention of establishing an empire. As John Flint has written: 'The motives behind British policy in the 1880s were pragmatic and practical. There was during that period no question in the minds of the British politicians of building anything, least of all an empire in Nigeria. The motives of British actions were entirely defensive, designed simply to retain existing areas of British commercial predominance. The acquisition of British political control over the Nigerian coast and the banks of the Niger in 1884–5 took place in a spirit of anti-imperialism and financial parsimony; and control was thus essentially minimal. The British meant only to prevent France from obtaining control of the British palm-oil trade on the Niger and its delta.'²⁰ Once the British government had proclaimed the Oil Rivers Protectorate it did virtually nothing for a number of years to transform this 'paper' protectorate into something more meaningful.

Enter the Germans

German disruption

Hewett was successful in concluding the treaties in the Niger delta which laid the foundation for the proclamation of the Oil Rivers Protectorate in 1885, but elsewhere he was not so fortunate. This was because Germany now entered the picture. Up to about

1880 British naval preponderance did not destabilise the political situation on the coasts because it was not necessary for it to annex territory or interfere actively. But this stability was ruined when France challenged the British in West Africa and Madagascar. As late as the mid-1870s, apart from Britain and France, the only other coastal powers were Egypt, Zanzibar and Portugal. Egypt and Zanzibar were both British client-states, and Portugal was almost one.²¹ British attempts to confine the area of 'competitive instability' by making protectorates on the coast between the Gold Coast and Cameroon were ruined by Bismarck. The German factor has also been mooted as a trigger of the scramble for Africa. Oliver and Atmore argue that France and Britain had no need to convert their informal spheres of influence into formal empire, that the two governments did not allow conflicts between traders to become 'causes'. According to them it was the sudden appearance on the scene of Leopold and Bismarck, neither of whom had hitherto shown any interest in Africa, that changed the situation. The way that they burst into the African arena, and the suddenness of their specific claims made within such a short time, threw France and Britain into a state of confusion, and forced them to follow suit and take steps to formalise control.²²

**Formal
German
colonies**

There can be little doubt that Germany's colonial activity in 1883–1885 and the Berlin Conference, at which Leopold's claim to the Congo was recognised, were major events in the partition of the continent. Above all, they made clear to Britain that informal control was no longer a sufficient safeguard of existing interests. Until Bismarck took an interest in obtaining colonies in Africa, Britain and France had the field virtually to themselves. Portugal also had interests, but was not considered a threat. So Germany's sudden interest did indeed alter the cosy situation, for Britain in particular. What is unique about Germany's entry into the colonial field is that, unlike Britain and France, it did not have a strong colonial tradition in Africa. Unlike the other two, it had no colonies in Africa. The German Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, had appeared supremely indifferent to colonies. Then suddenly, between mid-1883 and early 1885 Germany carved out four widely separated areas in Africa, establishing formal colonies in Kamerun (Cameroon), Togo, South West Africa (Namibia) and German East Africa (later Tanganyika and still later Tanzania).

**Diplo-
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tion:
Taylor's
hypo-
thesis**

Historians differ as to the reasons for this *volte face*, but they mostly agree that Bismarck was not thinking primarily of the value of colonies in Africa, but that he had his eye on diplomatic gains in Europe. In other words, 'Bismarck's map of Africa lay in Europe'.²³ As such Bismarck's plans form part of European rather than African history. But a few aspects of particular relevance to Africa need to be highlighted. One of the more inventive theories, part of which is still given some credence by historians, is that of A. J. P. Taylor who put forward the view that Bismarck entered the colonial field to win the friendship of France. Wanting to distract French attention from the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, he encouraged France to channel its energies into expanding in West Africa. At the same time he wanted to drive a wedge between France and Britain; he thus decided to enter Africa and to take colonies where British interests rather than French ones would be threatened. It has been suggested that Bismarck secretly hoped that Britain would make some objections to German colonial claims, as this would

enable Germany to portray Britain as a disruptive force, opposing Germany's legitimate ambitions in the same way as Britain had thwarted France. Whether or not there is any truth in this theory, certainly three of the four colonies taken by Germany affected British interests more than they did French ambitions. In connection with this theory, Bismarck knew that whatever objections the British might make, they would not be serious ones. The reason for this was that after France stopped cooperating with Britain on the *caisse de la dette publique*, Britain needed German support on this body in her bid to reform the Egyptian economy.²⁴

Taylor's theory refuted Taylor's explanation has been challenged by many historians. Thus H. A. Turner pours cold water on the notion that Bismarck could possibly have believed that success in the relatively unimportant African sphere could ever be regarded by the French as adequate compensation for the vital loss of Alsace-Lorraine.²⁵ It has also been said that Bismarck wanted to teach Britain a lesson, and show it that German support in Africa had to be paid for with closer cooperation in Europe.

Internal economic pressure Historians have recently devoted more attention to internal pressures on Bismarck as a factor in his decision to make Germany a colonial power. Like Britain and France, Germany also had its economic pressure groups. Others have argued in favour of domestic political gains Bismarck hoped to gain by espousing an expansionist programme that would be popular with the Conservative Party and also the Bremen and Hamburg merchants, and which at the same time might impress the Catholic Centre Party. The Hanse towns were putting pressure on Bismarck to look after German commercial interests in Africa. By the middle of 1884, with Britain alienated from France because of Egypt, Bismarck could get his colonies at bargain basement prices, although he remained sceptical of their value.

Advantages of colonial policy With the idea of colonies steadily gaining ground in Germany as a whole, an outward colonial policy might be worth some support in the 1884 Reichstag autumn elections. It seems likely too that Bismarck had the tariff policy he had embarked upon in 1879 at the back of his mind. He believed that an era of protectionism lay ahead on all sides, and he was afraid that unless Germany had colonies of its own it would be unable to make reciprocity agreements with other powers for the free entry of German goods into the colonies. Bismarck never became a fiery imperialist and he did not think that the colonies would ever amount to much. Besides which, they could cause problems. The colonies would come under the sovereignty of the Reich so that there would have to be an annual financial budget, which would give the Reichstag an extra opportunity of interfering in his handling of political matters. But with increasing European interest in Africa he could not afford to stand aside. If he was wrong about colonies and they proved to be the tropical treasure houses that many people believed they would become, history would be harsh in its judgement of the chancellor who had failed to secure part of this great bounty for Germany. And Bismarck was very concerned about the judgement of history. In many ways German participation in the partitioning of Africa was the outside manifestation of a new and confident united country, a self-assured Germany assuming its rightful place in the affairs of nations. Besides this, it did not seem as if the colonies would cost the treasury very much, as the German companies

which had been agitating for German protection would undoubtedly bear the brunt of the cost.

Franco-German alignment The break with France over Egypt in 1884 (for the first two years after 1882 there was no break as France expected that Britain would again give it a share in what was happening in Egypt) gave Bismarck the opportunity to act in Africa and help himself. Taylor saw this as purely a move to pick a quarrel with Britain and as evidence that Bismarck wanted to move closer to France, but it has never been very clear why Bismarck preferred friendship with France rather than see the country more isolated after the rift with Britain. This has been a weak point in Taylor's thesis. It now seems that by 1884 Bismarck had decided that Germany needed colonies and spheres of interest, and that he had to have a Franco-German alignment against British preponderance in order to do so.²⁶

Bismarck's anger with Britain It has been argued that Bismarck may even have found other ways of protecting German commercial interests, but what drove him finally to colonies was the British attitude between January and June 1884 over South West Africa. Bismarck's motives in expansion were complex, but prestige played a vital role here. He called Britain's attempt to impose a 'Monroe Doctrine for Africa' and exclude Germany from areas that Britain herself did not possess or even claim, as 'an affront to our national self-esteem'.²⁷

German protection of Angra Pequena German missionaries had been active in the region for many years and there was also a substantial German trading interest at Angra Pequena. Because of renewed Herero-Nama warfare, in February 1883 the German ambassador inquired whether Britain would afford protection to the Bremen merchant Lüderitz at Angra Pequena (renamed Lüderitz Bay in 1921). When no clear answer to the request was forthcoming, in September 1883 Britain was asked whether she claimed sovereignty at Angra Pequena. Under pressure from the Cape, on 21 November Bismarck was informed that the establishment of a foreign power in South West Africa 'would infringe legitimate rights' (that is, British rights). On 31 December Bismarck asked for particulars of British rights. He was not going to be put off by the claim to paramountcy. The British government was in no hurry to reply and entered into talks with the Cape government regarding the territory. They were still talking on 24 April 1884 when Bismarck informed the German consul at Cape Town that Angra Pequena was under German protection, basing the claim on treaties that had been concluded in May and August 1883. Taken by surprise, Lord Derby stated that while the British did not claim Angra Pequena, 'we had claimed a sort of general right to exclude foreign powers from that coast'.²⁸

Togo becomes a German protectorate It was at this point that 'the German factor' became a major consideration in Africa. Bismarck had seized the initiative, much to the discomfiture of the British. Some British politicians were slow in realising that the era of informal rule was quickly drawing to an end, but in November 1883 the cabinet authorised Consul Hewett to establish protectorates in West Africa. The money was slow in coming from the Treasury so Hewett left only in May 1884 on his treaty-making mission. As we have seen, Hewett was not too late in the Niger delta, where cut-throat British competition backed up by gunboats against Africans who were inclined to trade with the French had demoralised

French companies. But he was too late elsewhere. Britain was not bent on empire building and wanted to extend British protection eastwards from the Gold Coast to the Togo coast to stop smuggling around the edges of the Gold Coast. The Germans had well-established mission and trading interests here, and so did the British. Bismarck sent Gustav Nachtigal, better known as a traveller in the Sudan and the Sahara, with orders to extend German protection to areas where his fellow countrymen were operating. Between 4 and 6 July 1884 he signed treaties which brought the area under German protection, thus snatching it away from Britain.

German flag raised in Cameroon The British had a very strong presence on the coast of the modern Republic of Cameroon. The Baptist Missionary Society had been there since the 1840s, and the British consul of the Bights of Benin and Biafra visited the area periodically in his gunboat, so that in the 1870s the region clearly came within Britain's informal sphere of influence. Although the Germans were also represented here, their interest was a fairly recent one, dating from the opening in 1868 of a trading station on the estuary at Douala by the Hamburg firm of Woermann. Once again Hewett was too late; when he arrived in Douala on 20 July 1884 it was to discover that Nachtigal, who had hastened there from Togo, had raised the German flag in Cameroon five days earlier. Hewett was to go down in British colonial history as 'too-late-Hewett'.

British attitude to Bismarck's empire-building If Bismarck did indeed hope that Britain would offer some opposition to his colonial ventures, he would have been disappointed. Local British officials in West Africa were upset at the way that Togo and Cameroon, where there were well-established British interests, were snatched away before their eyes, but the British government did not regard Bismarck's building of a colonial empire as a threat. Despite the German tariffs of 1879, Germany was regarded by Britain as a free trading nation; it did not pose a strategic threat as it had no fleet to rival that of Britain. Besides, Britain was very dependent upon German support in order to enable it to reform Egyptian finances. So Britain would not antagonise Bismarck. Bismarck's interest took London by surprise. They had not realised he was planning to establish German colonies and they had some reservations about what they regarded were the underhand methods of Bismarck, pretending disinterest and making enquiries about British intentions while he was all the time preparing the way for the assumption of German authority.

Cape government objections It was the Cape government rather than the British government that objected to the establishment of German control. Although the British were not opposed to the German presence as such, it did complicate British policy in southern Africa. In 1883 it seemed likely that the activities of freebooters from the Transvaal (South African Republic) would result in the borders of the state being extended westwards. The fear that this stretch of land through Tswana territory, between the Transvaal to the east and the Kalahari desert to the west, would become part of the South African Republic, was a cause of deep concern to the Cape, as this was its only means of access to the interior.

Bechuanaland The British government had hitherto turned a deaf ear to appeals from the Cape, but the possibility that the Germans in South West Africa could link up with the South African Republic would ruin British policy of maintaining paramountcy through iso-

lating and encircling the Transvaal. A British expedition under Sir Charles Warren was sent to occupy Bechuanaland, and in January 1885 Berlin was informed that the territory had been brought under British protection. As in the case of the Niger delta it was the threat of foreign intervention that caused Britain to act to protect what it considered were its wider interests in southern Africa.

**Pro-
posed
Anglo-
Por-
tuguese
treaty**

Bismarck's anger at British attempts to exercise a sort of informal paramountcy was by no means confined to the establishment of colonies, and he entered the diplomatic arena to further embarrass Britain and promote his own aims. Britain was challenged at the Congo mouth where it had a considerable trade. The British did not appear to have any objection to the ratification of the Brazza-Teke treaty, but then in December 1882 Lord Granville at the Foreign Office told Lisbon that Britain would recognise its 'historic claims' at the Congo mouth. For some 40 years Britain had consistently rejected Portugal's claims to sovereignty over the Congo mouth. But now there were widespread fears that France would gain control of the mouth of the river and cut British traders off from the Congo. Britain began to look at Portuguese control of the mouth in a new light. Virtually anyone was preferable to having the French there. Although Britain had well-established interests on the coast between Cameroon and the Congo, it was reluctant to step in itself and assume responsibilities. Britain thus supported Portugal, signing the Anglo-Portuguese treaty on 26 February 1884, recognising Portugal's claims to the Congo mouth and its hinterland. Instead of taking responsibility itself, Britain promoted Portugal, thus falling 'back on a variant of their technique of informal empire. Others could administer on paper, while they enjoyed the trade.'²⁹

**Opposi-
tion to
the
treaty**

But the treaty soon ran into major opposition. The French, of course, opposed it. In Britain itself there was much opposition to the ratification of the treaty by the British parliament from British businessmen and church groups. The businessmen were afraid that French or Portuguese control of the mouth of the Congo would result in the exclusion of British trade. The campaign in Britain against the treaty received a moral basis when the Anti-Slavery Society focused on Portugal's poor record in combating the slave trade. At the same time Protestant missionaries were afraid that if Portugal controlled the area, Protestant missions would be excluded. It was this combination of internal and external pressure that defeated the proposed Anglo-Portuguese treaty.

**French
support
for Leo-
pold's
claim**

Leopold obtained French support for his plans for international recognition of his claim to the Congo by promising France that if he had to step down from the Congo (and few people really believed that he would be able to hold on to it) he would give France the first option on it. But this was not the only reason for French opposition to the Anglo-Portuguese treaty. They saw the treaty as an attempt by Britain to secure control over the Congo River. Ever suspicious of British moves, ever ready to put the most sinister construction possible on British actions, the French saw the treaty as a deep plot. As they read the situation, Britain had obstructed France in Egypt and secured control of the Nile; at the same time it was making treaties with chiefs in the Niger delta and thus preparing the way for British control of the Niger River. Now it was clear that it wanted the Congo as well.

Franco-German alignment Bismarck was so angry at Britain's behaviour over South West Africa that he refused to recognise the Anglo-Portuguese treaty in any form. He determined to destroy the informal system of empire as espoused by Britain with its pretensions to apply a sort of Monroe Doctrine. In August 1884, after the final Anglo-French break on the question of Egyptian finance, Jules Ferry began to respond positively to Bismarck's proposal for an alignment against Britain on African issues. Bismarck and France joined together to oppose the Anglo-Portuguese treaty. This was not a real entente or a permanent alliance that had any significant relevance to Europe, but it served Bismarck's purpose of destroying British pretensions, and at the same time of driving a wedge between Britain and France. This alignment collapsed soon after Ferry's fall from grace in March 1885, and in the later 1880s there was a marked improvement in German relations with Britain. But in this critical period between August 1884 and March 1885, the entire course of the partition of Africa was transformed.

Bismarck's call for a conference France accepted Bismarck's suggestion that all the Congo questions, including the British treaty with the Portuguese, be put to a conference. With French backing, Bismarck called for an international conference in Berlin to discuss the situation in Africa. Britain thus lost the initiative in the Congo question to Bismarck. Britain was unhappy at this Franco-German rapprochement, which came at a bad time for it, just when the Egyptian issue had strained relations with France and it needed Germany's support in Egypt. French colonial expansion and Germany's sudden appearance on the scene seemed to challenge British supremacy everywhere and to complicate Britain's wider diplomacy immeasurably. It was Germany's support for Leopold's claims that enabled the Belgian king's dreams to come true.

THE BERLIN CONFERENCE

Fourteen nations The representatives of 14 nations were present at Berlin when Bismarck made the opening speech on 15 November 1884. They were Germany, France, Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal Spain, the United States, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Italy, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. The General Act of the Conference was signed on 26 February 1885. It contained 38 clauses and covered a number of important issues. The Berlin Conference (known also as the Berlin West Africa Conference or the Congo Conference) was not one of the world's major conferences, but it was the first international conference to deal exclusively with Africa and was a reflection of the continent's growing importance.

International African Association recognised The significance of the Berlin Conference in the history of the partitioning of Africa has been the subject of great controversy. There is no agreement on the implications of what was discussed and decided at Berlin. Contrary to widespread belief, the conference did not partition Africa. Questions in connection with territorial matters were specifically omitted from the agenda. Nor did it create the Congo Free State. By the time the conference opened Leopold had obtained French, German and American recognition of the association and of the existence of the Congo Free State as an independent polity. All that the conference did was to give international recognition to Leopold's International African Association, in whose name the Congo Free State would be established.

British reaction The British were not too happy to accept this. Certainly no British officials and very few British businessmen believed that Leopold would be the disinterested trustee who would see that free trade in the Congo basin would be guaranteed, nor did they believe in the humanitarian principles of the International African Association. But with the collapse of the Anglo-Portuguese treaty, it was a case either of supporting Leopold's claims or of sitting back and watching French influence there grow. Although Bismarck wanted to destroy British informal influence at the Congo mouth, he did not want to do so at the expense of having French protectionism in the Congo basin. To Bismarck, to give the Congo to Leopold was a good solution to the Anglo-French Congo dispute; Leopold was certainly making all the right sort of noises about allowing free trade. Bismarck put pressure on the British to acquiesce, threatening that otherwise he would oppose the British claim to monopolise the commerce of the lower Niger.³⁰

British claim to the lower Niger And such a threat struck at the heart of British interests. Although British business interests and officials were concerned with securing continued free access to the Congo, they were even more anxious to ensure that British control of the lower Niger was not weakened. The British believed that at Berlin the French had two aims: to seal off the upper Congo by means of tariff walls, and to establish some sort of international control on the lower Niger that would interfere with Britain's predominant trading position on the river. The British position was that international control on the Congo should be established to allow free trade to flourish, but not on the Niger. The Britons argued that the Congo and the Niger were two completely different propositions. Britain had opened up the Niger, it gave free access to all comers, and the best guarantee of that continued free access and free trade for merchants of all nations was for the area to remain in British hands.

French hopes for the internationalisation of the Niger received a setback two weeks before the opening of the conference when Goldie reported that he had bought out the two French trading houses that had been in competition with his company. This news, together with Hewett's treaties with chiefs on the delta and lower Niger, rendered the British position very strong. To make doubly sure that French attempts to weaken this did not succeed, Britain needed Bismarck's support on the diplomatic front. And in order to obtain this, the British representatives at Berlin gave their support to Leopold.

Weakening of Franco-German affiliation Once the conference got under way it soon became apparent that the Franco-German rapprochement was weakening and that the French were wary of giving too much support to German plans lest this provoke a reaction at home and a possible accusation that France was following pro-German policies. They had worked together to ensure that the Anglo-Portuguese treaty was thwarted, but on the question of the Niger France did not obtain the hoped-for support from Germany for the internationalisation of the river. Bismarck increasingly realised that German interests on the free trade question coincided with British rather than with French policies.

Free trade The principle of free trade was recognised at Berlin, thus securing a victory for the British position. But in practice the free trade provisions of the Berlin Act meant little. No machinery was set up to see that they were enforced, and monopolies and concessions became the order of the day. The principle of free trade was falling into disfavour

in Europe generally and in the 1890s tariff barriers and customs dues became more common. Free navigation on the Congo and Niger also meant little. Although a supervisory commission was planned, it never came into being and control remained in the hands of those who controlled the territories through which the rivers ran – Leopold and Britain. In the case of Britain, the Niger was given over to Goldie's Royal Niger Company, which ruthlessly cut out rivals, whether British or foreign. W. R. Louis writes: 'In retrospect the work of the Conference appears hollow in view of the commercial monopolies established despite the Berlin Act. But at the time the accomplishments of the Conference appeared substantial, especially in British eyes because of the reverses suffered by France.'³¹

Effective occupation

At Berlin the 'right' of European powers to take over Africa was not questioned – Europeans were very sure of their own values and of the bounty they were passing on to the peoples of Africa by bringing them within the orbit of 'European civilisation'. Usually a few treaties signed by African leaders, who allegedly ceded their rights, were sufficient to keep rival powers at bay, but whether this was enough was no longer certain. At Berlin rules were laid down for the international recognition of new claims. In future 'effective occupation' was the only test of valid title. But we should not make too much of what 'effective occupation' implied. Nobody was appointed to examine claims to see if the occupation was indeed 'effective'. This was the era of the 'paper partition' of Africa. Many of the areas now claimed by virtue of treaties and a 'European presence' were not brought under the effective control of their European masters until many years had passed. Most of the railways were built only after the establishment of an administration. In practice 'effective occupation' meant that a European power would have to demonstrate that it had visible interests in the area, that its traders were active, and that it had appointed consuls. It meant no more than this. The construction of a primitive fort and the garrison of a few African levies under the command of a European sergeant were proof of effective occupation.

End of informal empire

The real significance of 'effective occupation' was that by laying down procedures to be followed in acquiring new *formal* colonies or protectorates, the Berlin Conference put an end to the idea of *informal* empire. It was the death knell of paramountcy and informal empire.³² The 'effective occupation' clause was a deliberate tactic by Bismarck to destroy the informal spheres of influence that had been such a cornerstone of British policy. Of course, even before the conference, Britain had been made all too aware that its informal spheres of influence were no longer an adequate safeguard of its interests. The French threat to Britain's Congo trade, and French initiatives on the lower Niger and in Madagascar, were all pointers in this direction. But it was the German formal annexations in West Africa that had destroyed Britain's informal West African empire.

German East Africa

But worse was yet to come. British policy in East Africa had been based upon the informal influence it exercised over the sultan. Britain would have liked the sultan himself to strengthen his authority on the mainland, to make his authority effective in the interior, but it had no intention of extending formal rule to the region. But now its entire policy was thrown into disarray. While the conference was sitting German agents were busy carving out a German colonial empire in East Africa. A group of Germans

under the leadership of Carl Peters, who a few months earlier had been one of the founders of the German Colonization Society, came back from an expedition to the East African interior armed with a number of treaties they had concluded with chiefs. Although Peters did not have any official backing, these treaties fitted in well with Bismarck's plans. Within a few days of the breaking up of the conference, Bismarck proclaimed a German protectorate in East Africa.³³ The German Colonization Society was authorised to take over the administration of the new protectorate. In this way Bismarck not only perpetuated the existing area of instability in West Africa, but extended it to East Africa.

**Britain
acquires**

The area claimed by the Germans took in much of what today is east central Tanzania, which until then had come within the sultan of Zanzibar's sphere of influence, although not his actual control. The sultan's coastal domains were not included in the German protectorate, and through their informal control of the sultan, had the British wanted to, they could have strangled German East Africa by preventing its access to the sea. But the British had no intention of doing this. They needed Bismarck's support in Egypt. In 1885 the region was not considered to be of great strategic value. There were also far more serious crises that demanded attention in 1885, such as the situation in the Sudan and a confrontation with Russia in Afghanistan. Although there were some objections to the almost clandestine way in which Bismarck went about his colonial empire-building, the British government in 1884–1885 had no serious objections to the appearance of the Germans in Africa. The Anglo-German agreement of 1886 restricted the sultan's mainland possessions to a 16-km-wide coastal strip.

**Significance of
Berlin
Conference**

The Berlin Conference was more symbolic than real. Many years ago historians referred to the conference in terms such as a 'tardy starting gun' for the scramble, but it was nothing of the sort. The French advance up the Senegal in 1879 had started the penetration of the interior with a view to taking it over, and the basis for Anglo-French rivalry had already been provided by the French occupation of Tunis, the British occupation of Egypt and the ratification of the Brazza treaty. The Germans had formal bases in South West Africa, Togo and Kamerun, and were establishing themselves in East Africa. Berlin gave international recognition only to Leopold's Congo. It was also said that the 'nibbling process' of the period 1881–1884 became a 'gobbling process' after Berlin as the powers scrambled to parcel out Africa among themselves.

**Conference as a
brake
on expansion**

But not all researchers said that. To some the conference seemed to do more to slow down imperialism than to speed it up, by attempting to impose free trade zones in the Niger and Congo basins, and by setting out rules for claims. As early as 1942 Miss S. E. Crowe wrote that the representatives at Berlin 'were not talking about partitioning Africa but rather of ensuring the continuation of the traditional free-trading system on its coasts and its great rivers ... The General Act may be seen as much as an attempt to apply the brakes to the partition as to accelerate it. Diplomats whose custom was to regard Black Africa solely from the point of view of coastal commerce did not become excited about the interior of the "mysterious continent". They were able to hope that ... they were delaying the moment when governments would be obliged to meet the heavy expenses of occupying new territories.'³⁴ More recent researchers have con-

firmed the views she arrived at in 1942. Professor J. D. Hargreaves has argued that, far from being a starting gun, Berlin represented an attempt to apply the brakes. Palm oil prices in West Africa had been low for a long time, and trade with Africa did not seem to have any particularly exciting prospects. The trading situation in East Africa was even more unpromising. European governments were reluctant to extend their authority to new areas, although traders might be drawn more into the interior in an attempt to find other sources of supply or to cut out middlemen. As Hargreaves sees it, the expansionist offensive of 1884–1885 lost momentum, and there was a pause in the partitioning of Africa.

End of coastal partition The Berlin Conference ended a stage in the partitioning of Africa. It has been said that it ended the 'paper partition' of Africa, but one can argue that the paper partition carried on up to the series of European conventions and agreements over Africa between 1889 and 1891. Even after that, for a number of years treaties continued to be used to keep out rivals. By the time of the Berlin Conference almost the entire coast was in European hands. Another stage was about to begin. Virtually all the areas annexed from 1882 had hinterlands which, if one went deep enough inland, clashed with one another. Once competition for the interior had been joined, and 'effective occupation' applied to the interior as well as to the coast, the scramble attained its own unstoppable momentum, and there could be no halting until the whole continent had been carved up into colonies and spheres.

THE 'LOADED PAUSE' IN WEST AFRICA, 1885–1889

Lull in the scramble Compared with the years immediately preceding the Berlin Conference, and the years from 1889 onwards, in the period 1885–1889 there was a lull in the scramble for West Africa. Hargreaves calls this a 'loaded pause', a gathering of strength for the next round of the scramble, a time for preparation. According to this view, at Berlin the governments had made an attempt at stopping the uncontrolled grabbing of territory and at continuing with the free trade system on the coast and rivers, because the only alternative to this was the heavy expense of formal control, which they wanted to avoid.³⁵

French attitudes to colonial expansion The disgrace and fall of Jules Ferry in March 1885 saw the expansionist lobby lose a powerful ally; at the same time the French humiliation at Lang-Son in Indochina seemed to many people to be a timely warning about the dangers of colonial adventures. Those Frenchmen who maintained that operations in far distant places wasted French power, which should be conserved for defence of France's vital interests in Europe, gained the upper hand over those who believed that expansion in Africa and the East could do wonders for France's prestige in the world. Many Frenchmen were troubled by the enormous military and financial expense that accompanied empire-building. French business interests were still not enthusiastic supporters of expansion – military officers on the spot wanted to bring African societies under French control, but many traders were opposed to the military campaigns as these tended to disrupt the trading relations they had built up.

Obstacles to French penetration This was very much a period in which the men on the spot took the lead. Only when they could persuade the government at home that the British were about to pre-empt them did the French government bestir itself and give permission for some limited action. By early 1883 the French were at Bamako on the upper Niger, but their control of the region and further penetration were threatened by Samory and the Tukolor empire. A third obstacle and the most immediate threat to French hegemony in Senegambia was Mahmadu Lamine, whose expeditions harassed the French lines of communication, frequently cutting telegraph lines.

Treaties with Samory and the Tukolor empire Colonel J. S. Gallieni, who was appointed commander of the Niger–Senegal area in November 1886, shared the vision of his predecessors like Faïdherbe, Brière and Desbordes. He was in no doubt that all the obstacles to a further French advance would have to be swept away. But in the absence of support from the government in France, Gallieni did not have the resources to act against all three of these polities. He therefore decided to tackle the most immediate threat – that from Mahmadu Lamine. Until such time as support from France was forthcoming for action against Samory and the Tukolor he would make peace treaties with them. Despite the writing on the wall at Berlin for the idea of informal empire, treaties remained a way of establishing a claim, which although it had no sanction of any law, might serve to keep other rivals out. If nothing else, the treaties would give an advantage at the bargaining table when it came to the delimitation of colonial claims. Gallieni hoped that his treaties with Samory and the Tukolor empire would serve the dual purpose of keeping them quiet while he attacked Mahmadu Lamine and would also act as a deterrent to the British. Gallieni was afraid that the British would establish an alliance with Samory, who was obtaining guns from them through Sierra Leone. Above all Gallieni wanted to prevent the British from establishing a presence on the upper Niger.

Although Ahmadu guessed that the French had made peace with him only as a temporary measure and that their long-term aim was to destroy him, he cooperated with the French against Mahmadu Lamine because he needed to obtain arms through them to maintain order in his empire. Besides, Ahmadu was also keen to see Mahmadu Lamine defeated.

Samory's empire was still expanding, but he was experiencing difficulties and unrest with the peoples he had recently conquered and so he increasingly favoured an alliance with France. In March 1887 Samory and the French signed a treaty in which Samory believed that the French and he had become allies, whereas the French believed that he had placed himself under their protection. This difference in interpretation was not important. The value of the treaty to the French was that its existence would act as a deterrent to any British expansion into Samory's lands.

Foundation for further expansion By the time Gallieni left Senegambia in 1888, despite the restraints that officialdom in France had put on military expansion, he had consolidated and even extended French control. The foundations for a further advance had been laid. Everything was in readiness for another major advance whenever the authorities in Paris decided to move ahead. The claim to many areas was, of course, still fragile. Title to Samory's empire

rested on a treaty which the powerful and undefeated Samory himself did not believe made him a subject of the French.

If one looks at other areas of French interest in West Africa in the period 1885–1889, then the correctness of the description of a ‘loaded pause’ is confirmed. French explorers and agents travelling between the upper Niger and Volta rivers and from the Ivory Coast inland to the upper Niger signed treaties as they proceeded. They therefore linked these two areas in the minds of expansionists, and made the Ivory Coast more significant because of it. By the end of the 1880s French imperialists were already beginning to cast their eyes towards Lake Chad as the ultimate goal of French expansion. It was coming to be seen as the meeting point of French thrusts from Algeria, Senegal and the Congo. In Dahomey the French had Porto Novo and Cotonou, but there was no move forward here and the French government had no inclination to fight with the highly centralised and powerful state of Dahomey. So, here too there was no advance in the period 1885–1889.

**Cessa-
tion of
Ger-
man
empire-
building**

Ferry’s fall disturbed Bismarck, who had worked well with the French premier; cracks in the Franco-German ‘alliance’ were evident at Berlin – these widened further after the conference. Bismarck was now keen to secure British cooperation in Europe and wanted to settle outstanding colonial differences with Salisbury. On the international scene, rapprochement between Russia and France and the threat of Russian conflict with Germany’s Habsburg allies meant that by 1888 Bismarck wanted British support. Besides, Bismarck was disappointed that the German companies he had hoped would relieve the German treasury of financial commitments in Africa had failed to do so. He was not keen to repeat the experiment. So here too in 1885 there was no enthusiasm for a further advance. For official German action the period was not a pause but a cessation, for after 1885 Germany did not resume its empire-building, although the borders of its existing colonies were considerably extended.

**Britain
and the
‘long
stand-
still’**

In 1885 the Irish issue dominated British politics and there was little time to devote to Africa. The return of Salisbury to the Foreign Office in 1885 did mark a shift in balance, however, and historians have seen 1885–1892 as a period in which, largely because of Salisbury’s guiding hand, Britain recovered the initiative it had lost to Bismarck in the years between 1883 and 1885. But this did not really apply to West Africa. For Britain in West Africa, Robinson and Gallagher went as far as describing the period from 1890 to 1895 as the ‘long standstill’.³⁶ Salisbury regretted the disputes with France over African issues, as this unnecessarily complicated Britain’s foreign relations and made agreement over what he considered were more important issues so elusive.

**Mer-
chant
press-
ure in
the
Gambia**

But although the British government remained opposed to any decisive action, the increasingly insistent pleas by British merchants from the mid-1880s for the government to give them more assistance in their trading operations made officialdom aware that something more than informal control would have to be devised to safeguard British interests. Since the middle of the century the various small states along the banks of the Gambia River had been involved in wars that resulted from changes in the Gambian economy as it moved from a slave trade economy to one based on ground-

nuts. The British government warned the governor of Gambia not to become involved in these conflicts, and certainly not to do anything that would involve the British treasury in any expense. In 1886 British merchants in the Gambia were complaining that the government was not providing enough protection for traders in the interior, and although Britain did authorise some action to put an end to faction fighting, this was done more in response to a fear that the groundnut trade would be harmed and to French interference than it was to any desire to expand.

Pressure in the Gold Coast

Sierra Leone merchants were demanding action to put an end to unrest beyond the colony's borders, as this was seriously disrupting trade. Beyond the borders of the Gold Coast Colony, the Asante, jealous of their trade with the far interior, were preventing British traders from penetrating beyond their territory to open up trade further inland. In the late 1880s the government was being pressed to bring the Asante under control and improve communications and transport facilities so that the interior could be opened up to trade. But they were not interested in doing so. One may contrast this attitude with that of the French who were expanding from Senegal into the western Sudan where, as early as the 1850s, Faïdherbe had recognised the necessity for crushing the indigenous empires, and where French expansion was aimed not merely at defeating these empires but at adding them to the French possessions. The British, on the other hand, had defeated the Asante in 1874 and then withdrawn.

Pressure in the Lagos hinterland

In February 1886 the whole of the coastline opposite Lagos was made part of the Lagos Protectorate, but beyond the coast fighting as a result of the collapse of the Oyo empire in Yorubaland was having an adverse effect on the Lagos trade. In its struggle against Ibadan, the Yoruba state of Ijebu blocked off trade between Lagos and Ibadan. There was a clamour from various quarters for British action in the interior. The desire of the traders for Ijebu to be brought to heel was supported by the Christian missionaries, many of them Sierra Leonians of Yoruba origin, on the grounds that Ijebu refused to admit Christian missionaries. The combined trader-missionary pressure for official action had not borne fruit by 1889, and when the British government did eventually move it was not because of these pressure groups but, as on the Oil Rivers, for fear of French action. The British were not so much interested in solving the problems of Yorubaland as in keeping the French out.

British merchants in Lagos and French merchants in Dahomey eyed each other very suspiciously, and when a French expedition in 1888 signed a treaty of trade and friendship with Abeokuta, an important commercial centre behind Lagos, it seemed as if the French were formally going to move into the Lagos hinterland. Being reluctant to take over the area itself, the British government sought and received assurances from the French that they had no political designs on the region. The British government, although relieved, felt that it would be prudent to allow the Lagos government to conclude treaties with chiefs in the interior. The British government did not specifically acknowledge these, but they were an insurance for the future, a bargaining counter if steps had to be taken because of the French threat. In this sense they were not unlike the French treaty with Samory. So although there was no advance here in the period 1885-1889 it was a 'loaded pause' as the way was prepared for an advance later.

British reluctance to assume responsibility

These were all seeds that would bear fruit after 1889, but in the period immediately after the Berlin Conference the British government was unwilling to assume colonial responsibilities. The years before Berlin, and the conference itself, had made it abundantly clear that territories under its informal control could be snatched from under its very nose. Britain's policy of informal rule was in tatters, but it was not ready to replace it with formal rule. That would come later. Where some decisive action was necessary because of significant interests that required to be defended, as in the area of the lower Niger River, Britain allowed others to take responsibility for upholding British interests. On the coast the British had the Oil Rivers Protectorate, where virtually nothing had been done to make their rule effective. Higher up the river control was given to George Goldie, whose agents by 1886 had succeeded in obtaining 237 treaties with local rulers, ceding their territories to his company. On the basis of these the British government in 1886 granted a royal charter to Goldie, and his company now became known as the Royal Niger Company.

Royal Niger Company

The company pursued commercial penetration ruthlessly, opening and closing markets at whim to reward those who gave it favourable trading terms and to punish those who did not. They made their own prices, their own monopolies, undercutting all other traders and making a mockery of the free trade agreement of the Berlin Conference. The company's constabulary did not carry out normal police duties, but was used to undertake expeditions to enforce the company's trading regulations. The company exploited but did little to develop the economy of its trading empire. The charter expressly forbade the setting up of any trade monopoly, but Goldie circumvented this by making use of the fact that the charter allowed him to impose customs and other dues to help cover the costs of government.

Liquor trade

By the mid-1880s most of Africa had not been affected by the liquor trade, as Muslims did not drink spirits; apart from this, liquor was bulky and difficult to transport. But along the navigable rivers of West Africa and on the coast, cheap imported liquor was the staple of commerce. On the lower Niger liquor was the favoured trading item. If Goldie could stop the free transit of liquor he would be able to get around the Berlin Conference's aim of keeping the Niger open to the traders of all countries. The restriction of the liquor traffic would not harm British manufacturers as most of the liquor came from Germany, the United States and Holland. If the liquor trade was cut down, he reasoned, this could force African traders to accept more British manufactures in return for their palm products. Making use of the Berlin Act's provision for the charging of dues he charged high duties on liquor entering the Niger, defending these on humanitarian grounds as an act designed to protect the indigenous inhabitants from this evil. Since Goldie collected the customs, in effect he was paying the dues from his one pocket and putting it into the other.

Weaknesses: Royal Niger Company

The Royal Niger Company relieved the British government of having to assume authority itself. The company was expected to expand and secure the approaches to Hausaland, and to do so before the French could get there. But the Royal Niger Company was not so strong as it liked to claim. The political framework upon which Goldie's monopoly rested was fragile, as was the basis for the trading monopolies. On

the Benue its traders went as far as Adamwa, but local Africans did not allow them to build factories on the banks of the river, or even to disembark. There were numerous gaps in the treaty system along the rivers, where local rulers had not signed treaties. Even where there were treaties, Africans sometimes insisted that they had not sold their land to the company, but had placed themselves under the company's protection on the understanding that the company would protect them against their enemies. Hausa traders were not attracted by Manchester cloth traded by the company and rather took their trade north to Kano. The company did not have the strength to force its terms on reluctant emirs; the most it could do was to use its supremacy on the river to keep foreigners out. In this it was largely successful. But it did not have the resources for a political expansion programme.

Opposition to the Royal Niger Company Opposition to the company was not confined to the Africans. There was no clear dividing line between the Oil Rivers Protectorate and the company's sphere of influence, and by 1889 British trading interests from Glasgow, London and Bristol, who were operating in the protectorate, objected to the way in which Goldie was extending his operations to the delta. They were joined by powerful British shipping interests who feared that Goldie would start his own shipping line and so be able to dictate freight rates. Business groups in Lagos were also opposed to Goldie because he had tried to exclude them from the Niger. All of these interest groups would have liked the government to revoke Goldie's charter and itself take control of the area. But the government was unwilling to do so.

Interference by consuls It is in French Africa that one sees this period as one in which the men on the spot used their initiative to pave the way for major advances later, when the government in France had come around to supporting expansion. But in this period, in the British sphere there were also men on the spot who were busy paving the way for the assumption of British control. This was particularly true in the Oil Rivers Protectorate, in which the British had done nothing to make their authority effective after they had proclaimed the protectorate in 1885. In this period both Hewett and Harry Johnston, as consuls, interfered more in the affairs of the African trading states in the delta. A few inventive Africans, such as Jaja of Opobo, tried to become independent of the European traders by trading directly with Europe, but the willingness of the British consuls to intervene on the side of British traders doomed their efforts. Africans were speedily losing the ability to make their own decisions. The case of Jaja and Bonny demonstrates the way Europeans became more involved in the affairs of the Niger delta.

Bonny Bonny was the strongest and richest of the delta states in the middle of the nineteenth century, and its capital was on an island in the far eastern part of the delta. In the early 1850s the British consul had King William Pepple deposed in order to end the disruption to trading activities that had resulted from a power struggle in Bonny. In 1883 Consul Hewett was largely responsible for King William's successor, George Pepple, being deposed. He was restored to power in 1887, and a firm alliance was created between the British consulate and the modernising Christian elements in Bonny, who worked well with the Europeans.

Jaja and delta trade In the meantime, Jaja had broken away from Bonny and founded the prosperous trading state of Opobo, which succeeded in capturing many of Bonny's markets. Jaja was a shrewd moderniser who welcomed schools but not missionaries, whom he feared would try to subvert the basis of the state. At first he had an agreement with a number of British firms who paid him dues and accepted the trading conditions he laid down. But with the fall in oil prices, in 1884 these firms came to an agreement among themselves about the price they would pay for oil. Jaja refused to accept the lower prices offered and attempted to establish direct links with the Glasgow firm of Miller Brothers. The British firms in the delta complained bitterly to Consul Hewett, saying that Jaja was obstructing trade. They asked for the consul's assistance to help them bypass Jaja so that they could trade directly with the interior.

Jaja exiled The crisis came to a head when the 27-year-old Harry Johnston arrived in the Oil Rivers as vice-consul in January 1887. He was a dedicated and passionate imperialist who shared Cecil Rhodes's vision of a large part of the map of Africa being painted red. When a modernising group of Bonny complained that Jaja had taken most of their markets he decided to act. He tricked Jaja into going aboard HMS *Goshawk*, took him prisoner and sent him into exile. Johnston did this of his own accord; his action was not authorised by Whitehall. In fact, Salisbury was angry when he heard what Johnston had done. The British prime minister decided to uphold the action, however, as it would cause even more harm if he reversed Johnston's decision.

Hewett and Nana This was a clear example of the way in which the initiative had passed to the men on the spot. In 1886 Hewett also forced Nana of the Itsekiri to lift a ban on trade which the king had imposed as a protest against falling prices. Nana was largely beholden to Hewett for his position, as the consul had supported him when his claim to the title was challenged by a rival lineage. In this instance Nana had used Hewett's support to defeat his rivals, but in the long run it made him dependent upon consular favour. But in the late 1880s this sort of intervention was exceptional. As Hargreaves writes, 'the British still preferred to govern through the co-operation of the African *élites*, and Africans thus retained some freedom to decide how far collaboration seemed compatible with their own essential interests and values'.³⁷

Anglo-French convention of 1889 The increasing Anglo-French rivalry in West Africa was reflected in the convention of 1889, which incorporated a number of boundary agreements. This was a limited gesture on the part of the British government and it was hoped that this would eliminate rivalry and so make any other action unnecessary. The convention defined the western border of the Gold Coast for about 30 km inland and at the same time fixed the boundary between Porto Novo and Lagos. Of course neither of these two arrangements would prevent one or other of the powers from penetrating behind the other's coastal spheres and blocking off the trade that went to the coast, but it was nevertheless a step towards resolving the Anglo-French rivalry. The basis for French claims to the Ivory Coast was also recognised.

Although nothing was done in 1889 to secure a greater share of the hinterlands of Sierra Leone and the Gambia for British traders, Hynes suggests that the reason was that 'it was in those particular areas of West Africa where commercial opinion in the metropolis

supported the demands of the local African merchants for state intervention, the Gold Coast and Lagos, that the British government ultimately intervened. Conversely, it was largely the lack of support in business circles in the metropolis at the crucial moment of delimitation negotiations that permitted the government to ignore the clamour of British merchants in the Gambia and Sierra Leone for the preservation of their hinterlands in the late 1880s ... Until the 1890s there was no serious mercantile pressure for territorial expansion in the region of Sierra Leone. Unlike the situation in the Gold Coast and the region of Lagos, where powerful metropolitan commercial groups pressed for government intervention in the interior, there was no strong or sustained mercantile pressure to extend British influence inland in the region of the Gambia or Sierra Leone in the second half of the 1880s. There was of course pressure from British merchants in the colonies themselves, but without firm backing from metropolitan businessmen this was insufficient to move the government.³⁸

Non-existent British threat

The French made much of their gains in the convention of 1889, believing that the British were threatening them on all sides. But in reality only Porto Novo had been in danger from the British, and by 1889 this part of the coast had lost much of its attraction for British expansionists as the German annexation of Togo in 1884 had finally ruined any chance that Britain may have had of obtaining a long uninterrupted stretch of coast from the Gold Coast to Lagos.

Treaty of 1890

In another agreement with Britain in 1890 France obtained British recognition of France's right to a foothold on the shores of Lake Chad. The area north of a line drawn from Say on the Niger to Barruwa on Lake Chad (virtually the modern northern border of Nigeria) was recognised as a French sphere of influence. The area to the south of this, including the caliphate of Sokoto, was theoretically in the hands of the Royal Niger Company. In return for a free hand in huge areas of the western and central Sudan and in Madagascar, France accepted the British protectorate over Zanzibar and Pemba.

Salisbury's attitude to French territory

Salisbury was not in the least concerned at the large areas that he had allowed France to have. In the House of Lords on 11 August 1890 he said: 'I will not dwell upon the respective advantages of places which are utterly unknown not only to your Lordships, but to the rest of the white human race ... Anyone who looks at the map and merely measures the degrees will perhaps be of opinion that France has laid claim to a very considerable stretch of country. But it is necessary to judge land not merely by its extent but also by its value. This land is what agriculturists would call "very light land"; that is to say, it is the desert of Sahara.'³⁹

Formal control of interior about to begin

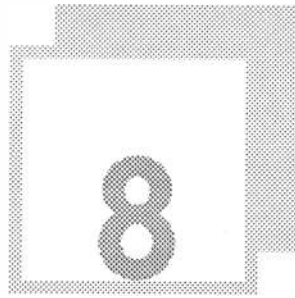
By 1889 European formal control was in most places confined to coastal settlements. In the 1890s Europe began to take effective action in the interior and moved deep into the heart of Africa. Of course in the case of the French in Senegambia, they had been active in the interior for a number of years. But further progress here meant that France would have to confront the Tukolor and also Samory. To establish the French presence firmly in the heart of the interior it would have to destroy these empires. If the early and mid-1880s saw European formal control being established over large areas of the African coastline, particularly in West Africa, and the period from 1885 to 1889 saw a

lull in European activity in West Africa, the decade of the 1890s was characterised by the establishment of formal control over most of the African interior.

Notes

- 1 P. Curtin, S. Feierman, L. Thompson & J. Vansina, *African history*, p. 452.
- 2 C. W. Newbury & A. S. Kanya-Forstner, 'French policy and the origins of the scramble for West Africa', *Journal of African History*, 10(2), 1969, p. 263.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 275.
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- 5 R. Robinson & J. Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: The official mind of imperialism*.
- 6 A. G. Hopkins, 'The Victorians and Africa: A reconsideration of the occupation of Egypt, 1882', *Journal of African History*, 27, 1986.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 375.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 376.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 374.
- 11 *Ibid.*, pp. 379, 384–385.
- 12 Sanderson, 'The European partition', p. 128.
- 13 Hopkins, 'The Victorians and Africa', p. 389.
- 14 Sanderson, 'The European partition', p. 112.
- 15 R. O. Collins (ed.), *Problems in the history of colonial Africa 1860–1960*, pp. 10–16.
- 16 P. Kennedy, *The realities behind diplomacy; background influences on British external policy 1865–1980*, p. 91.
- 17 Newbury & Kanya-Forstner, 'French policy and the origins of the scramble', p. 270.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 271.
- 19 Quoted by C. C. Eldridge, *Victorian imperialism*, p. 152.
- 20 J. E. Flint, 'Nigeria: The colonial experience from 1880 to 1914', in L. H. Gann & P. Duignan (eds), *Colonialism in Africa 1870–1960*, vol. 1, p. 224.
- 21 Sanderson, 'The European partition', p. 117.
- 22 R. Oliver & A. Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, pp. 105–110.
- 23 Collins, *Problems in the history of colonial Africa*, p. 3.
- 24 A. J. P. Taylor, *Germany's first bid for colonies, 1884–5*.
- 25 H. A. Turner, 'Bismarck's imperialist venture: Anti-British in origin?', in P. Gifford & W. R. Louis (eds), *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial rivalry and colonial rule*.

- 26 Sanderson, 'The European partition', pp. 112–113.
- 27 Quoted by Sanderson, p. 109.
- 28 Quoted by Sanderson, p. 132.
- 29 Robinson & Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, p. 171.
- 30 Sanderson, 'The European partition', p. 136.
- 31 W. R. Louis, 'The Berlin Congo Conference', in P. Gifford & W. R. Louis (eds), *France and Britain in Africa: Imperial rivalry and colonial rule*, p. 216.
- 32 Sanderson, 'The European partition', p. 133.
- 33 K. Shillington, *History of Africa*, p. 306.
- 34 Quoted by J. D. Hargreaves, *West Africa partitioned*, vol. 1, *The loaded pause, 1885–89*, pp. 40–41.
- 35 Hargreaves, *The loaded pause*.
- 36 Robinson & Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, p. 379.
- 37 Hargreaves, *The loaded pause*, p. 121.
- 38 W. G. Hynes, *The economics of empire: Britain, Africa and the New Imperialism 1870–95*, pp. 95–96.
- 39 Quoted by Robinson & Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, p. 303.



The African partition

**French
plans
for an
empire**

By 1889 France was ready to move deep into the African interior, to consolidate its hold on Senegambia, the upper Niger and the western Sudan, and in the east to converge on Lake Chad in the central Sudan from a number of directions. Once there, elements among French policy-makers planned to advance further eastwards into the eastern Sudan (the modern Sudan Republic) and establish a belt of French territory right across Africa by joining up with French interests in the Horn of Africa. France had also determined to tighten its hold on Madagascar and to prevent the British from increasing their influence there.

**British
position**

By 1889 Britain had not yet made any decision to take formal possession of the hinterlands of its coastal colonies in West Africa. By this time it had given up hope of an early withdrawal from Egypt in North Africa. It looked as if British policy of keeping the Russians out of the Mediterranean by bolstering Turkey would fail, and that Britain would have to fall back on Cairo for the defence of the Levant.

**Other
Euro-
pean
powers**

In the more northerly part of Central Africa lay King Leopold's Congo Free State, the administration and exploitation of which had been transferred to concession companies. Leopold had ambitions to extend the borders of his personal state to the south and east, and in the latter direction he had plans for establishing an outlet on the Nile. The Portuguese had not advanced very far inland from Mozambique and Angola but had hopes of linking the two. Italy had an eye on Libya, but it was only in 1911 that it

made an obvious attempt to gain control of this country. It also had interests in the Horn of Africa and in the 1890s was planning to extend formal control deep into the interior at the expense of Ethiopia. Spain looked hopefully across the Straits of Gibraltar towards Morocco, but because of increasing French interests in the region and also British policy of supporting the independence of the kingdom, Spanish hopes were to remain just that.

The African partition

The 1890s were therefore to see the European powers move into the interior of Africa from their coastal footholds. What was the situation there? In the last two chapters the focus has been so much on European motives and moves that it is easy to be lulled into thinking that this was the only partition. But it was not. The African peoples of the interior were not simply sitting in some timeless state of primitive 'being', waiting to be swallowed up by the advancing Europeans. The European partition of the continent was not the only partitioning process: there was also an African scramble for Africa. The African partition of the continent started before the European partition, and in some areas was still continuing at the time of the European scramble. From the late 1880s, but particularly in the 1890s, the two scrambles merged. In certain areas the European scramble interrupted the African scramble. It is not an easy task to define this scramble because almost any activity in the interior may be said to have contributed to the nature of the final partitioning of Africa. But certainly events that should be included are the Egyptian expansion in the Sudan and further south, as well as in the Horn of Africa, the Swahili-Arab penetration of the East African interior under the banner of the Omanis, the expansion of Shoa in Ethiopia, the Ngoni invasions across the Zambezi, and the Chokwe expansion. We may also include Fang expansion from southern Cameroon to Gabon and into Congo-Brazzaville. The jihad movements in West Africa and the Dyula(Mandinka) empire of Samory are also part of this 'African scramble for Africa'.¹ Nor can we leave out of this African restructuring of the continent the secondary states that emerged and which were led by men such as Rabih, Mirambo, Msiri, Tippu Tip and Emin Pasha, to name but a few, or the activities of robber barons like Mlozi. We have already dealt with some of these states and empire builders in their appropriate geographical settings. Others will be mentioned in this chapter. The point is that, all too often in the past, European historians have acted as if African societies were in a state of petrification, in a permanent state of limbo, timeless and unchanging. If they were not thought of in that way, then their history was considered to be one long tale of internal struggles, faction fighting and wars against neighbours.

Although in this chapter we shall be concentrating on the establishment and expansion of large states, and the attempts of small states to increase their size, there is much truth in R. Oliver's statement that the African scramble for Africa 'was not a scramble for territory, but for those resources, including resources in human labour, which could be obtained by the use of force, especially the force of the gun'.²

Place of small states in Africa

The concentration on large states should also not mislead us into believing that such states were typical of Africa or that the African scramble was necessarily leading to the creation of fewer, larger states. In some instances, as in the case of the Oyo empire in West Africa, the nineteenth century represented a disintegrating tendency. In the period

immediately following the liberation of African states from colonial rule in the 1960s, African historians were at pains to show that Africa, no less than Europe, did have large states and empires that were comparable in size and complexity to European states. In the enthusiasm to demonstrate that Africa was not, in this sense, lagging behind Europe or, more pertinently, inferior to Europe, African historians tended to neglect the many smaller polities and groups and the so-called stateless societies. It was only later that African historians came to give these small political and social units more attention, and to assert that, in many ways, these were more representative of Africa than the vast empires. Today it is widely recognised that most Africans prior to the colonial era did not live in these few large states, but in the many smaller entities. Huge states were the exception rather than the rule in Africa. The purpose of highlighting major political conglomerations in this chapter is to demonstrate that when the European scramble for the interior was joined in the 1890s, large areas of Africa had for some time experienced other scrambles, and that many Africans who came under European colonial rule had in the not so distant past come under the sway of other alien peoples.

EGYPTIAN EXPANSION

**Inva-
sion of
the
Sudan:
Moham-
med Ali**

The African scramble for Africa took many forms. In North Africa it was the Egyptian state that embarked on a policy of expansion. Mohammed Ali invaded the Sudan in 1821. By the end of the year most of it was under his control, but in 1822 widespread rebellions broke out and it was only by the end of 1824 that reinforcements had succeeded in establishing Egyptian authority firmly. The Sudan was not taken over by Egyptians as we know them today, but by a Turkish-speaking body whose members had dominated Egypt since the Middle Ages. Mohammed Ali divided the Sudan into districts and provinces which were under the overall control of a governor-general stationed at the newly founded town of Khartoum at the junction of the White and Blue Nile. The main function of the administration was to facilitate the free flow of slaves northwards, and to swell the Egyptian coffers with tribute. Desire for recruits for his army played an important role in Mohammed Ali's expansionist moves southwards. Virtually every year until 1838 raids for recruits were made, but the demand could not be satisfied. The Sudanese resisted vigorously. Hitherto they had not paid regular taxes, and were not at all pleased when the Turkish administrators extended the Egyptian system of taxation to the Sudan. The brutal manner in which the tax was collected exacerbated matters, and the Sudanese displeasure at the disruption to their economic life found expression in a number of revolts.

**Exploi-
tation**

The Turkish imperialists who took over the Sudan brought about improvements in Sudanese agriculture, they extended irrigation systems, introduced new crops and were active in combating pests and plagues. But all this was done not to develop the Sudan, but to increase the production of goods sent to Egypt. Egypt exploited the Sudan and among other articles, indigo, gum and ivory went north to Egypt. In addition, the Sudan was Egypt's cheapest source of livestock.

**Ivory
trade**

As in Egypt, Mohammed Ali initially monopolised exports from the Sudan. But in the 1840s he was forced to open up the ivory trade of the upper White Nile to European

merchants after the defeat of the Shilluks had given Egypt access to the large elephant herds of the southern Sudan. European firms which had established themselves in Khartoum sent traders southwards down the navigable Nile in search of ivory. Initially it was easy to obtain ivory close to the river, and traders either shot elephants themselves or exchanged tusks with the local inhabitants for beads. But this could not last for long. Elephants became scarce in the vicinity of the river, while the locals soon had more beads than they knew what to do with. Hunters had to move further afield in search of ivory.

**Arab
raids**

Although European merchants played a prominent role in opening up the White Nile and Bahr al-Ghazal to trade, it was not long before Cairo-based European firms engaged Arabs to collect slaves and ivory. The Arabs were set up in fortified camps, called zeribas, from which they conducted their raids. From the 1850s the search for ivory led to raids in the interior. Within a few years both the upper White Nile and its western tributary, the Bahr al-Ghazal, were notorious for the abuses committed by traders and their followers. The Arabs discovered that the Nilotic pastoralists wanted cattle in exchange for ivory and slaves. The Arabs thus organised raids to obtain cattle with which to barter. Cattle were also obtained in the form of taxes. Those who could not pay their taxes in cattle often paid in slaves. Some of these traders became very powerful merchant princes, with trading stations, large administrative staffs and private armies of slaves. The Sudanese al-Zubayr Rahma Mansur in the Bahr al-Ghazal was one of these. Many of the slaves taken in this region went to Cairo and also eastwards across the Nubian desert to Damascus and Mecca; Suakin on the Red Sea became an important harbour for the distribution of slaves across the Red Sea to Arabia, India and the Far East. Most of the ivory taken here found its way to Zanzibar.

**Expansion:
Sir Samuel
Baker**

Mohammed Ali's grandson, Ismail, was also a great expansionist. He had dreams of making Egypt the head of a great African empire. In 1869 he commissioned the British explorer Sir Samuel Baker to go down the White Nile to take measures against the slave trade and to open up a trade route that would divert the East African ivory from Zanzibar to Cairo. He was appointed governor of any new territory he annexed to the south of the Sudan in what became known as Equatoria. Baker tackled these tasks with enthusiasm and even made an unsuccessful bid to bring Bunyoro in East Africa into the Egyptian fold. Unfortunately tact was not one of Baker's strong points and he alienated the local inhabitants of the Sudan as well as the Arab slave dealers.

**Charles
Gordon**

In 1874 Baker was succeeded by Charles Gordon, another Englishman, who was keen to extend Egyptian rule to the great lakes of East Africa. He tried to bring Bunyoro under Egyptian rule, but with no greater success, and in 1876 he resigned. In 1877 Ismail again took Gordon into his service as governor-general of the whole Sudan with his headquarters at Khartoum. Gordon fought the slave trade with tremendous energy and fervour but his measures caused much resistance and in 1879 Ismail requested him to resign. Baker and Gordon had done little more than establish a few scattered posts in Equatoria, and Gordon's successor, the German Edouard Carl Oscar Schnitzer (better known in history as Emin Pasha), was unable to strengthen the administration.

- Modernisation** As in Egypt, modernisation also came to the Sudan in the form of telegraph lines and by the 1860s there was a fairly large fleet of steamers in Sudanese waters. In fact the steamer, together, of course, with firearms, played a major role in the southward expansion, helping to overcome the resistance of the people and also the obstruction of the Sudd barrier, which blocked the approach both to the equatorial Nile and the Bahr al-Ghazal.
- Zubayr** When the Egyptian advance reached the Bahr al-Ghazal, it came up against the region's biggest slave trader, al-Zubayr Rahma Mansur, who had built a large empire for himself. Ismail decided that the best policy would be to befriend Zubayr and in 1873 he made him governor of Bahr al-Ghazal. Ismail later arrested Zubayr and tried to break his power, but in this he was unsuccessful. The people of the Bahr al-Ghazal rallied around Zubayr's son Sulayman. Ismail succeeded in inflicting a military defeat on them, but he could not make his rule effective, and when the Mahdist forces in 1883 became a rallying point for the Sudanese against foreign rulers, the chiefs of the Bahr al-Ghazal cooperated with the Mahdi to overthrow rule from Cairo.
- Massawa** Ismail realised that, with the opening of the Suez Canal, the Red Sea would become more important and so he extended his activities to the Red Sea and Somali coast; he also had designs on Ethiopia. In 1865 the ports of Suakin and Massawa were ceded to Egypt by the Ottoman sultan. Massawa was an island off the Red Sea coast with an excellent harbour. In the nineteenth century there was a continual battle for control of Massawa between the Ottoman empire, Egypt, the rulers of Tigré, and a local noble family. In 1813–1814 Mohammed Ali seized it on behalf of the Ottoman sultan, but he was soon forced to withdraw; he retook it in 1833, withdrew once again in 1841 and regained it in 1846 for a period of some three years. In 1865 the sultan permitted Ismail to take it over. This placed the Egyptians in a good position to control imports into Tigré in the north of Ethiopia.
- Ismail defeated in Ethiopia** In 1875 and 1876 Ismail occupied Berbera and Zeila on the Somali coast and Harar, which was further inland; he also decided on a major assault on Ethiopia. But this proved disastrous for him. Attacks launched on Ethiopia in 1875 and 1876 were repulsed and the Egyptian invading forces were virtually annihilated.
- The Mahdi** All thought of further expansion was shelved as problems in Egypt itself increased. So, far from embarking on further expansion, Egypt was soon to lose its own independence. Britain inherited Egypt's colonies, but while it regarded its stay in Egypt as temporary it did not intend taking vigorous action in the Sudan. So when the revolt led by the Mahdi succeeded in winning over virtually the whole of the Sudan in 1883, the British decided to evacuate it. Only in Equatoria did Emin Pasha, who had built up a considerable following since he had been appointed governor in 1877, hold on, becoming the leader of a nascent state.

ETHIOPIA AND THE HORN OF AFRICA

- Ethiopian isolation** In northeast Africa there was significant state-building in what is modern Ethiopia. The geography of Ethiopia with its high mountains and deep ravines helped to isolate it from European influences, as did the fact that it was of no strategic importance either to Britain or to France. Egypt and Italy did, indeed, have designs on Ethiopia, but by the time that the challenge from these quarters gained serious momentum, much progress had been made towards unifying the divided states that occupied the region, and the rulers of a new unified Ethiopia were able to repulse threats from these quarters. So far from becoming part of a foreign empire, Ethiopia actually participated in the scramble for Africa, engaging in a programme of expansion.
- Tigré** But little of this late nineteenth-century strength was evident around 1800, when Ethiopia was still weak and divided, and very unsettled. In the Christian core of the country there were a number of independent states. The most powerful of these was Tigré, situated in the north, in the heartland of the old kingdom of Axum. It was mainly a Christian state but in the south and east there were large Muslim populations. Because it was close to the coast, it had the best access to firearms, which it obtained from Massawa.
- Shoa** It was the state of Shoa in the southeast, centred on the modern city of Addis Ababa, that was to be so successful in restructuring northeast Africa and participating in the scramble for Africa. Christians predominated in the highlands but the south and west was in the hands of Galla (Oromo) traditionalists and Muslims. Warlords and princes fought one another in bitter struggles. Shoa had firm economic ties with the Gulf of Aden, importing goods through the ports of Tajurah and Zeila; it also conducted a large trade with the inland, independent walled Muslim city of Harar.
- Egyptian threat** In the early part of the century the biggest threat to the region came from Egypt, and as early as 1821 Egyptian soldiers from the Sudan penetrated into the western borderlands in search of gold. In the late 1820s the Egyptians made slave-raiding forays into Ethiopia. The Egyptian threat from the Sudan continued sporadically into the 1870s. On the coast Europeans were establishing spheres of influence and enclaves. Britain occupied Aden in 1839, and in the 1840s Britain and France opened consulates in Massawa. In 1862 the French acquired Obok, and in 1869 an Italian shipping company purchased Assab from a local sultan. Although the Europeans were obtaining footholds on the coast, prior to the opening up of the Suez Canal they did not do much to consolidate their holdings or to penetrate the interior. Except for expansion into the hinterland of Massawa by the Italians, expansion inland by Europe was largely a post-1880 phenomenon.
- Tewodros II** In 1855 Kassa, who had emerged as one of the strongest and most successful of the many robber bands on the northwest frontier of Ethiopia, had himself crowned by the abuna (head of the church) as the Negusa Negast (King of Kings) in Tigré. He took the name Tewodros II. He may be regarded as the father of modern Ethiopia in the sense that he conceived the idea of a strong united Ethiopia and took steps to bring this about. He believed that he was destined to revive the Ethiopian nation, and he did much to

unite the country and to give it a centralised government. He realised that the country could be controlled only by military means and so he created a well-organised army to support him. He did have some trouble importing enough arms, however, as the Egyptians in the Sudan and the Turks at Massawa prevented arms from going to him. The aim of any modernising that he undertook was to move his army more quickly, for example by obtaining European craftsmen to make roads. He reduced the power of the various princes and embarked on a programme of internal reform. But local ties and traditions were very strong and the rigid centralised government that he introduced alienated many influential churchmen and nobles. The princes were unhappy at the reduction of their power, while the ordinary people objected to the heavy tax burden that was placed on them.

Revolts Revolts and resistance were breaking out all the time, and Tewodros spent most of his reign fighting against rebels and rivals. By 1865 the greater part of the kingdom was in revolt. His cruelty, drunkenness and increasing signs of mental derangement did not help matters. By 1867 his army had begun to disintegrate and although the immediate cause of his downfall was foreign intervention, by this time it was clear that he had failed to reunify Ethiopia. Although there were many reasons for his downfall, his attempt to provide additional money for his reform programme by taxing church lands played a significant role in the opposition to him. As in the case of the Egyptian rulers, Tewodros needed a large amount of money if he hoped to establish a national army and a central administration. His attempts to reduce the number of clergy and to confiscate certain church lands and distribute them to tax-paying farmers met with great resistance from the church and they helped mobilise public opinion against him.

Defeat of Tewodros Thus when the British despatched a large force to 'rescue' a British consul arrested by Tewodros in a minor dispute, the Emperor had little local support and was easily overcome by the British, who allied themselves with Johannes IV, one of his rivals. Tewodros was defeated, and he committed suicide as the invaders stormed his capital of Magdala.

Johannes With British arms and support, Johannes was crowned emperor in 1872, and by prudently allowing the provincial rulers to retain most of their privileges he persuaded them to accept him as emperor. During his period of rule Ethiopia was threatened by Egypt, the Italians and the Mahdists of the Sudan. Although he succeeded in warding off all these threats, the Egyptian occupation of the Red Sea and Somali ports prevented Johannes from obtaining arms. Massawa had once again come into Egyptian hands in the second half of the 1860s, and they stopped the export of arms into Ethiopia. Access to arms played an important role in building up and restricting the power of the various contending forces and this problem fatally weakened Johannes in his struggle against Menelik, the young Shoa ruler in the south, who was putting in a strong bid to challenge him for the position of emperor.

Menelik Menelik was building up a large and well-equipped army with firearms bought from the French and Italian traders on the coast. The money to buy the arms came from the increase in the demand for slaves from the region. Early in the nineteenth century, when

Russia conquered the Caucasus, where the Ottoman empire had obtained many of its slaves, the supply of slaves from this source was cut off. Restrictions placed by the British on the export of slaves from the Omani sphere of influence on the east coast made dealers turn to Ethiopia as an alternative source. Slaves were taken across the Red Sea to Arabia and to the Persian Gulf and Iraq. Menelik made his profits not by dealing in slaves himself, but by charging tolls on the trade that passed through his country. As Shoa was close to the richest part of the Horn of Africa, it benefited greatly from the trade that went from the southwestern interior to the coast.

**Egypt
de-
feated**

Egyptian expansion continued. Its attempt to take over northern Ethiopia was frustrated when an army of some 70 000 men, assembled by Johannes, crushed an Egyptian force at Gundat in November 1875. Ismail assembled a well-equipped army of 20 000 in a revenge attack. But over 200 000 men responded to Emperor Johannes's call and the Egyptian force was annihilated in 1876. The Ethiopians captured 16 cannon, and about 12 000 rifles and vast quantities of ammunition and other supplies.

**Truce
be-
tween
Johan-
nes
and
Menelik**

While this Egyptian threat was still hanging over his head, in 1875 Johannes triumphed in a clash with Menelik, but was forced to accept a weak truce because of the danger that existed from the Egyptians in the north. A large-scale war between Tigré and Shoa seemed likely but neither Johannes nor Menelik was willing to push the matter to extremes and a compromise was reached in which Menelik renounced the title of emperor and Johannes recognised Menelik's independence subject to the payment of tax.

**Euro-
pean
expan-
sion**

So by 1880 Ethiopia was united and at peace. The Egyptian threat from the Sudan was soon to be replaced by a threat from the Mahdi, however. Egyptian domination of the Somali coast along the Gulf of Aden was also about to end, as the European powers made their presence there more effective. In the 1890s effective European control in the Horn of Africa was still limited to the coast. The British were laying the basis for what became British Somaliland. Djibouti, in the French sphere, had become a centre of importance in the firearms trade and as a coaling station for French ships bound for the East. In 1885 Britain had allowed the Italians to take over the former Egyptian Red Sea port of Massawa. They did so because they believed that Germany was preparing to move in there; the British, who did not want it themselves, preferred to have the weaker Italians there. British support for Italy in other places on the coast provided the Italians with firm bases from which to move inland. Italian explorers went into the interior and signed treaties, thus enlarging the Italian sphere of what was to become Italian Somaliland. Their position in the interior remained precarious, however.

**Ethiopi-
an ex-
pansion**

Ethiopia was showing more vigour in expanding its domain in the interior than the Europeans were in expanding inland from the coast. This is why it is often said that Ethiopia itself participated in the scramble. In the course of the 1880s, Menelik advanced northwards from his base in Shoa with the aid of modern guns he had bought from Italian agents. He conquered the pagan Galla to the west and south of Shoa and also moved eastwards. When Emperor John died in 1889, Menelik was by far the

strongest of the local rulers, and with the help of the Italians, who were interfering more and more in the affairs of Ethiopia, he was crowned emperor.

Treaty of Wichale After being crowned emperor, in May 1889 Menelik signed the Treaty of Wichale, which defined the boundary between Ethiopia and Italian Eritrea, with Italy. There was a difference of opinion between the Ethiopians and the Italians as to the interpretation of the treaty, with the latter insisting that Menelik had agreed to the establishment of an Italian protectorate. Menelik denied this, and in 1893 he roundly condemned the Treaty of Wichale. The Italian prime minister, Francesco Crispi, was a fiery nationalist, and he had a dream of creating a massive northeast African empire for Italy by linking Eritrea with the Italian possessions on the coast of Somaliland. He was determined to make effective the protectorate which, he insisted, had been recognised by Menelik in the Treaty of Wichale.

Battle of Adowa By 1895 Menelik had a well-equipped army of 100 000 men. But as with many African armies of the time, the logistical problems of feeding them on the march were considerable, so that an army of this size could not stay long in the field. The Italians could therefore have exercised a little patience and waited for this formidable force to begin to disintegrate and disperse of its own accord. But they were not prepared to play a waiting game. After the Italian forces suffered a minor reverse in December 1895, Crispi applied increasing pressure on his commanders to present him with a major victory. The Italians advanced and on 1 March 1896 there was a clash close to the town of Adowa. The Ethiopians succeeded in splitting up the three Italian brigades and separating them so that they could attack them individually. The Italian army was crushed and in the course of a single morning history was made – a European power had suffered a major defeat at the hands of an indigenous polity. For Menelik the victory brought great prestige.

Claims in Ogaden recognised Menelik did not follow up his victory at Adowa, and diverted his attention instead to the borders of the Sudan in the west, and to the Galla country, north of Lake Rudolph, in the south; to the east he drove a wedge of Ethiopian territory into Somali lands in the Ogaden. Ethiopian claims to parts of the Ogaden were recognised by Britain, France and Italy in treaties concluded between 1897 and 1908. Thus Ethiopia participated in the scramble for Africa.

External factors in Ethiopia's unification If we look at Ethiopia in terms of internal and external events and stimuli, the impetus to build a united state in Ethiopia undoubtedly came from within, but Europe obviously played a role in providing the means to do so. Access to arms was crucial in warding off threats to Ethiopia from Egypt and the Sudan and in conquering foreign rivals and putting down rebellions. International trade also played a role, and the slave trade gave Menelik the opportunity of collecting the funds with which to purchase arms. The threat, as Menelik and Johannes saw it, came from the Turco-Egyptians and Islam, not from Europe. In fact they wished to align themselves with Europe, whom they saw not in terms of Europe but in terms of being Christians. Although Tewodros needed more finance to keep his big and well-equipped army in the field, because of Ethiopia's

isolation he did not have the same access as Egypt did to European lines of credit. His attempts to use the church as milch cow and provide the means were self-defeating.

SECONDARY EMPIRES IN EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

African scramble for Africa

In East and Central Africa an African scramble for Africa preceded the European partitioning. The Omani presence dominated events in this part of Africa. It had a major impact on the relationships that developed in the interior and also on relationships with the European powers in the nineteenth century. One immediate difference between most of the states discussed in this chapter and the Omani state is that the latter had its centre on the East African coast, whereas most of the others essentially had their bases in the interior of the continent. In East Africa European traders took longer to reach the interior than they did in West Africa, and until well into the late nineteenth century the most visible presence of Europe in East Central Africa was that of the Protestant missions.

The only major states in this region were in the vicinity of the Great Lakes, where Buganda was expanding its influence and power. Bugandan restructuring was interrupted by the British in the early 1890s.

Importance of firearms in empire-building

The African scramble was a scramble for resources, including human resources, not for territory. And in the husbanding of these resources, firearms played a crucial role. We have already hinted at how important a supply of modern firearms was for the empire-building of a leader such as Menelik, and in chapter 4 we saw the role this played in the rise of the secondary empires such as Msiri's empire in Katanga and Tippu Tip's between the Lualaba and the Lomani. It was because they had mostly been built upon the shifting sands of the supply of arms that the secondary empires in Africa were fundamentally unstable. Dominance in an area could be lost to neighbours who suddenly gained access to large numbers of arms, or subordinates, having acquired substantial hordes of arms, could break away from the empire.

Role of secondary states

Between them the Swahili-Arabs, the Chokwe, and rulers such as Mirambo, Msiri and Tippu Tip, were responsible for bringing about major changes in East and Central Africa, building up new states and undermining old empires. When the Europeans penetrated into the East and Central African interior, these secondary states played a major role in resisting the extension of formal European control.

Tippu Tip

The European and African scrambles converged. The expansion of Tippu Tip's empire was stopped by the desire of Leopold to expand the borders of his Congo Free State further eastwards. When Stanley arrived at Kasongo on his way down the Congo River to the Atlantic, Tippu Tip sent an escort and thus used the opportunity to extend his authority down the Luapula River, reaching Stanley Falls by 1882. But after 1884 he was in competition with the Congo state of Leopold, and while the Belgians were out-maneuvring him, they appointed him governor of the eastern Congo. When the Germans were facing a rebellion in German East Africa from 1888, they set up a blockade mainly to prevent arms reaching the rebels. Leopold cooperated with Bismarck, but he had his own reason for doing so, which was to stop the arms trade as a

way of gaining as much control over Tippu Tip as he could. He therefore confiscated consignments of arms destined for Tippu Tip and banned the sales of arms and ammunition on the upper river and its tributaries. Leopold represented these measures as steps to combat the slave trade. In the meantime Congo officials were competing with Tippu Tip's men for slave supplies.

Tippu Tip retired to the coast in 1891, and in 1892 the local Belgian officer made a concerted attack on the strongholds of Tippu's empire, which were finally reduced after some eighteen months of bitter fighting. Leopold represented the war between the Arabs and the Free State as a war against the slave trade, but his real aim was to expand eastwards.

Msiri Another state that had been responsible for some considerable restructuring in the Central Africa interior, and which fell prey to the ambitions of Leopold, was the predatory state founded by Msiri. When the British South Africa Company, which had been founded in 1890, started to show interest in Msiri's Garenganze kingdom, which was disintegrating, Leopold decided to take action and sent an expedition there in 1891. Msiri's empire fell to the Belgians in 1891 and Msiri himself was shot by a Belgian officer after he refused to fly the Congo Free State's flag over his capital. The officer was immediately killed by one of Msiri's sons. The Anglo-Portuguese treaty of 1894 accepted the Free State's control of Katanga and the border between modern Zambia and Zaïre was fixed.

Chokwe The opportunities afforded by the demand for ivory played a large role in the rise of the Chokwe as a power of some significance in West Central Africa. It was the availability of firearms in the second half of the nineteenth century that enabled the Chokwe to become so strong. During the 1880s they overran the whole of Lunda territory. The Chokwe had to face both the Congo Free State and the Portuguese as they penetrated into the interior. By the 1890s they were engaged in fierce fighting with the Congo Free State. The Chokwe territory eventually came under the control of the Portuguese but for some years into the twentieth century the Chokwe retained a good deal of freedom from colonial control. The Chokwe, Ovambo, Kongo and Ovimbundu defied Portuguese tax collectors. One of the reasons that they could do so was that the boom in rubber from 1890 to 1905 enabled them to buy guns from Portuguese traders. When the rubber trade collapsed in 1910, and the sale of arms to Africans was banned in 1912, Portugal, for the first time, was able to make its authority felt throughout Angola.³ The Portuguese finally succeeded in subduing them only in the 1920s, and even after that they continued expanding, albeit peacefully, into the Congo and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia).

Mlozi and the African Lakes Company These are but a few examples of secondary states and changes that may be regarded as African-inspired restructuring. Thus one could regard the operations of Mlozi in the Lake Nyasa area as an attempt to establish his hegemony over the broken groups in the region and to create a large raiding state. In June 1884 the African Lakes Company established a station at Karonga, to the west of Lake Nyasa, near its northern end. A Swahili half-caste by the name of Mlozi established a raiding state in the area, and by

late 1887 he had a number of fortified villages from which his gangs sallied out to capture slaves forcibly, wreaking havoc and devastation in the process. In order to maintain itself the company had to fortify its station. The company refused to recognise Mlozi as the ruler in the area, and gave sanctuary to his victims, thus setting itself up as a rival force.

**Mlozi's
defeat**

The British government refused to intervene decisively. Had the African Lakes Company been stronger, like the Niger Company, the government might have placed responsibility in its hands, but it was poor and badly managed. The war between Mlozi and the company dragged on. Lugard was brought in to take charge of military operations against the slavers, but he returned to England without being able to bring the war to an end. Mlozi's efforts were to founder not as a result of African resistance, but because of the appearance on the scene of Harry Johnston. In the second half of 1889 Johnston made treaties with the chiefs west of Lake Nyasa and he succeeded in bringing the war with Mlozi to an end, although it took him somewhat longer to break the robber baron's power. At the end of 1895 Mlozi's power was finally destroyed and he was killed.

THE INDIGENOUS STATES OF THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL SUDAN

The Sudan or bilad al-Sudan, as the Arab geographers and historians of classical times called it (meaning the 'land of the black people') was an area of great mobility and mixture of population. There were major urban centres and large rural populations, pastoral nomads and settled agriculturists; Muslims and those who adhered to traditional beliefs lived side by side with freemen and large slave populations in this melting pot that was hemmed in by the Sahara desert in the north and the forest region in the south. In the early nineteenth century there was some major state-building in this region, largely as the result of a number of holy wars or jihads which had as their aim the reform of Islamic practices and the establishment of states run in accordance with Islamic law.

Fulbe

There was one ethnic group in the Sudan that was very different from the others because they were mobile pastoralists. They were the Fulbe (called Fulani by the British in the nineteenth century). Some people believe that they were originally Saharan pastoralists who migrated towards the west along the southern fringes of the desert. They eventually settled astride the middle Senegal valley. Some gave up their pastoral ways and became part of the Tukolor in Futa Toro, where they adopted Islam. But other Fulbe preserved their traditional paganism and slowly moved into other areas. By the fifteenth century there was a large number of them in the Futa Jallon highlands and in the region of Masina, the inland delta of the Niger, upstream of Timbuktu. They were also to be found in Hausaland, and by the sixteenth century there were Fulbe in Borno; by the eighteenth century there were a large number of them in Cameroon. What is interesting about this migration is that, except for Futa Toro and Futa Jallon, the Fulbe did not take over or even mix with the people among whom they settled. They remained distinct communities, exchanging a few products with the agriculturists, but did not otherwise participate in events. In due course, however, some Fulbe did give

up their pastoral way of life, and moved to the growing urban centres, where they were converted to Islam.

Conversion to Islam Fulbe isolation from the communities in which they lived may help to explain why, over a period of time, many of them converted to Islam, which gave Fulbe everywhere a sense of unity. The Fulbe in Futa Toro and Futa Jallon kept contact with the rural wandering Fulbe and with the Fulbe in the cities. The result of this was that when the urban Fulbe in the eighteenth century began to reorganise West African society into something approaching a Muslim theocracy, the revolution spread very quickly.

Islam religion of the cities By the eighteenth century, although Islam was widely spread over West Africa, it was principally the religion of the cities and did not have strong roots in the countryside. An important fact to remember about Islam is that it is a comprehensive religion that is concerned with every aspect of society. It has its own laws, usages and morals, its own rules for the organisation of the state. But, because they were in a minority in the Hausa states in which they settled, the Muslims could not give full expression to this Islamic way of life and this resulted in a feeling of frustration among many, although by no means all Muslims. Muslims in the cities, frequently being better educated than most of the population, often held high positions in the administration, and looked down on the locals, who returned the compliment by remaining suspicious and resentful of the immigrants, whom they did not readily accept. In most of the Sudan there existed a sort of 'mixed Islamic' society, where Islam and traditional religious customs and practices existed side by side.

Divisions: Muslim community The Muslims themselves were divided about what they wanted. On the one side there were the radical reformers who wanted to see the state run along Muslim lines and for whom there was no compromise. On the other side there were those Muslims who were doing very well for themselves as scribes, counsellors and administrators in the courts of the Hausa rulers. They did not want the status quo disturbed.

Muslim merchants were very much in demand by local rulers and they too were content to put up with non-Islamic practices and did not want any change. By the early nineteenth century Hausa traders monopolised much of the long-distance trade of the central Sudan. They exported products such as potash, leather goods, salt, textiles, livestock and slaves, and imported kola nuts from Asante, and textiles from Yorubaland. Lancashire cottons came to Kano from both the Atlantic coast and the north, as did European firearms. The Hausa were active in re-exporting both. They also re-exported cowries which arrived from the Yoruba towns.

Reform of Islam: jihads But although the Muslim merchants involved in this flourishing trade did not want to change the status quo, in the end they did not have much say in it. In the second half of the eighteenth century a great surge of Islamic fundamentalism swept Arabia and was transferred to the western Sudan. In due course, a number of religious orders were established whose aim it was to reform Islam. In order to do so they often engaged in jihads, or holy wars. The jihads of the eighteenth century and the larger ones of the nineteenth century were the result of a desire to revive Islam in its purest form. The Fulbe in Futa Jallon rebelled against their rulers in 1725, and declared an imamate, a

state governed in accordance with Islamic law. Their example was followed in Futa Toro where Muslim Tukolor and Fulbe engaged in a successful jihad between 1769 and 1776.

Conflict between Fulbe pastoralists and the settled farmers In the early nineteenth century there were a series of jihads in the Hausa states; these jihads resulted in the formation of the caliphate or empire of Sokoto, a province of modern Nigeria, bounded in the north by the Niger River and to the west by Dahomey (the modern state of Benin). It all began in the rural areas with a reform movement that expressed its discontent in a peaceful manner. At first the aim of the reform movement was to spread Islamic education more widely in the rural areas, but after about 1788 it aimed at establishing autonomous communities of its own on the borders of the Hausa states. This was not popular with local authorities since it deprived them of jurisdiction over some of their subjects. The situation worsened as escaped slaves joined these autonomous communities and, having been converted to Islam, were protected against recapture. Local authorities reacted by attacking Fulbe pastoralists, enslaving them and seizing their cattle. This was done presumably in a bid to get the reformists, most of whom spoke the Fulbe language, to stop their activities. This tactic had the opposite effect, however, and drove the pastoralists further into the reformists' camp. The Hausa slaves supported the reformists, who, although they were slave owners, did not enslave fellow Muslims or their nomadic kin. The Hausa had no such scruples. So their slaves had good reasons for joining the jihads.

The above was by no means the only source of friction between the Fulbe pastoralists and the settled farmers. There were tensions that had been simmering for a very long time. The Fulbe pastoralists, both Muslim and non-Muslim, welcomed the attacks of the reformists on the government, as they were particularly resentful of Hausa taxation of their herds. In their search for water and grazing, in dry seasons the Fulbe pastoralists would pasture their cattle on farmlands, which would naturally enough annoy the farmers, especially, as frequently happened, if this occurred while they were still harvesting their crops. When the Fulbe pastoralists brought their cattle close to the agricultural settlements, they also came within the range of local urban authorities, who taxed them and restricted them in the use of water and grazing. They had to pay fines for damage to crops. In the rainy season they had other problems when they moved their cattle to drier areas, for here they came into contact with the Tuareg, who were not happy to have to share their water resources with the Fulbe. The Tuaregs raided Fulbe cattle, and in times of drought or famine such depredations increased.

Usman dan Fodio The leader of the jihad that resulted in the establishment of the Sokoto empire was Usman dan Fodio, a Fulbe of the Torodbe clan. He was born in 1754 in Gobir, a Hausa state which was a Fulbe stronghold. Having spent some years studying under well-known teachers at Agades, in the 1770s he began preaching in Gobir. He had two main aims: to convert those Fulbe pastoralists who had not yet converted to Islam, and to reform those who were nominally Muslims but who were in 'mixed situations' and who tolerated all sorts of non-Muslim practices within their spheres of influence in the courts of the Hausa rulers. At first he hoped that he would be able to achieve this by peaceful

means through his preaching, but as time went by he became increasingly frustrated and impatient at his lack of success.

Fulbe revolt Although he gained the support of the pastoral Fulbe, the core of his movement comprised the educated Fulbe and Muslim Hausa of the towns, who had very little time for the ruling elite. On their side the Hausa resented the growing power of the Fulbe in their midst. The Gobir rulers became increasingly concerned at dan Fodio's popularity. He became tutor to Yunfa, and, involving himself in politics, was instrumental in having Yunfa appointed to the throne of Gobir in 1801. In 1803, when Usman dan Fodio set free a number of Muslim slaves that Yunfa had intended to sell and refused to deliver them up to him, the latter moved against his former tutor. Dan Fodio withdrew, and was joined by both Fulbe and Hausa. He was proclaimed Commander of the Faithful, which was the traditional title of the caliphs, the successors of the Prophet. A jihad was declared in 1804. Gobir fell quickly and Fulbe throughout Hausaland revolted against their rulers. Katsina fell in 1807 and Kano yielded in 1809.

The jihad of Usman dan Fodio was not a centralised operation conducted by a coordinated effort from the centre. It was more in the nature of a series of small jihads, in which Muslims acted against their local rulers. When the jihad started, a Fulbe clan leader would join the movement and fight his own 'holy war', oust the ruler and become the local emir, within what was to become the Sokoto caliphate.

Reasons for defeat The Hausa rulers were defeated partly because they were unable to muster any support for themselves. They had so oppressed the Hausa peasantry that no help was forthcoming from this sector. At the same time divisions between the Hausa rulers had been endemic for centuries, so there was no question of them being able to unite to fight the common enemy.

Sokoto caliphate The whole of Hausaland was now in dan Fodio's hands and he organised the seven Hausa states into one big kingdom or caliphate, replacing the ruling dynasties with Fulbe emirs. After his success dan Fodio retired from the political scene, returning to more scholarly pursuits, and established himself in the newly created Sokoto, which became the headquarters of the Sokoto empire. He handed the leadership reins to his brother Abdullah and his son Mohammed Bello. He went back to teaching and lived quietly until his death in 1817.

Expanding Sokoto empire The jihad was pursued under Abdullah and Mohammed, particularly to the south and east. In the south, Nupe came under the control of the caliphate, the Niger River was crossed, and the Ilorin province of the disintegrating Oyo empire was incorporated into the Sokoto empire. To the east, western Borno was taken and Adamwa added to the empire.

Economic boom The internal political and administrative organisation of Sokoto was the work of Mohammed Bello, who died in 1837. He divided the caliphate into 15 emirates, each with an emir with wide powers of control. Each of the Muslim emirates in the Sokoto caliphate ordered its own local affairs. The emirs paid an annual visit to the capital to demonstrate their loyalty to the caliph and to pay their tribute, but apart from this the

Sokoto empire soon settled down into the same sort of economic pattern as the states it had replaced. But the stability brought to the region was to provide the impetus for a major economic boom unparalleled since the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries.

Reforms Although the states now had new Fulbe rulers, this did not make such a big difference, as they increasingly adopted Hausa customs and language. But they were not so corrupt, and adherence to the precepts of Islamic law meant that justice was more evenly dispensed. Literacy also spread. The wars that had plagued the Hausa states were brought to an end by the unifying influence of Islam. It was largely the new Fulbe role of rulers rather than religious reformers that was responsible for spreading Islam from the towns into the country areas. The jihads brought Hausaland firmly into Islam. M. Hiskett's conclusion is that the reform movement 'resulted in a decisive change of direction that swung Hausa society, firmly and explicitly, into the orbit of the Islamic world, where previously it had hovered uncertainly on the fringe'.⁴

Protectorate of Northern Nigeria It was not an easy task to rule this empire, and Hausa resistance flared up continuously. There were also attacks from outside, from Borno and from the Tuaregs of the desert. But Sokoto remained intact until taken over by Britain at the end of the nineteenth century. The two most southerly provinces of the Sokoto caliphate, Nupe and Ilorin, were, in terms of the charter granted to the Royal Niger Company, placed within its sphere of influence. But the Company was unable to make its administration effective here and its failure to do so played an important role in the decision by Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary, to revoke the charter. On 1 January 1900 the British government assumed direct responsibility for the protectorate of Northern Nigeria.

Borno and the jihad In the northeast the jihad of dan Fodio and members of his family was halted in Borno, west of Lake Chad. At the end of the eighteenth century there was a great deal of restlessness among the large number of Fulbe in Borno, who chafed against the subordinate position they held in the state. The success of dan Fodio encouraged them to take up arms against their rulers in 1808. They enjoyed some initial success, and the western regions of Borno were taken and added to the Sokoto caliphate. But further progress was halted when the local Saifawa ruler called upon the help of Mohammed al-Kanemi, a Muslim intellectual and religious leader who had been born in the Fezzan. With a band of fanatical supporters he organised resistance, at the same time protesting to the caliph of Sokoto that, as Borno was already an Islamic state, there was no reason for a jihad against it. Apart from this, many of its inhabitants were unwilling to accept Fulbe domination, and this provided another rallying point of resistance. Although he was unable to regain Borno's western provinces, he stopped any further inroads into Borno. Al-Kanemi was not a reformer, and he took up arms to preserve the territorial integrity of Borno and also to preserve the Islamic status quo there.

The al-Kanemi dynasty After al-Kanemi's death in 1835, his son Omar founded the al-Kanemi dynasty, having displaced the Saifawa dynasty that had ruled for a thousand years. Omar ruled over Borno until 1881. But Borno never regained its former glory. These were years of decline, and the state was beset by internal and external problems. Omar's incompetence as a

ruler was the cause of much internal unrest, but the main threats came from outside. To the east was the vigorous state of Wadai, which was gaining strength from the Sanusi Order, which brought the Wadai–Benghazi trade route to life. Although the Sanusi were also re-opening the old Borno–Tripoli route, this could not compete with the route to Benghazi, with the result that Borno’s share of the trans-Saharan trade was declining. Although in decline, the once great empire of Borno continued to exist until the last years of the century.

Jihad in Masina Since the fifteenth century Fulbe herdsmen had been moving steadily into the upper Niger area. The Fulbe in Masina were not happy at the way the Bambara of Segu extended their authority over them in the mid-eighteenth century, ruling through local dynasties who exacted tribute from the Fulbe, raided their herds and also took Fulbe away into slavery. So in 1818 a Fulbe Muslim, Sheikh Ahmadu (sometimes also referred to as Ahmadu Lobbo or Seku Ahmadu), who had been fired with enthusiasm by the message proclaimed by Usuman dan Fodio, found that the Fulbe of the region were eager to join in his jihad. This resulted in the establishment of the Fulbe-dominated Islamic state of Masina, which also claimed some authority over Segu, Timbuktu and Kaarta. Masina was governed in accordance with strict Muslim ideals, and it survived until 1862 when, in the course of the jihad of al-Hajj Umar, it was conquered and became part of the Tukolor empire.

The jihad of al-Hajj Umar Al-Hajj Umar was a Tukolor, born in Futa Toro, south of the lower reaches of the Senegal River, in 1794. Like dan Fodio, he spent some years travelling, visiting large areas of the Sudan and Egypt; he settled for a spell in Borno and Sokoto before returning to the Futa area in about 1838. The title ‘al-Hajj’, which means ‘the pilgrim’, is an indication that he had made the pilgrimage to Mecca. His message appealed to large numbers of the Fulbe and Tukolor. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Fulbe in Senegambia found the rule of the Torodbe almamis, whom they had earlier helped to put in power, very oppressive. The almamis had also entered into a kind of partnership with the French, allowing them to build fortified posts along the Senegal River valley. The more pious among the Fulbe resented the French military presence and their growing authority. So it is no surprise that the Fulbe of Futa Toro responded with enthusiasm to the appeal of al-Hajj Umar, and throughout the jihad the bulk of the soldiers came from Futa Toro.

Reasons for success In the 1840s al-Hajj Umar set himself up on the borders of Futa Jallon, and with the firearms he imported from the coast he was able to equip his soldiers well. What was different about the jihad of al-Hajj Umar was that whereas the earlier jihads had been more in the nature of spontaneous local uprisings against unpopular pagan rulers, the Tukolor jihad was a consciously planned and executed military operation aimed at creating an Islamic state. Al-Hajj Umar was able to succeed because he had the support of many groups of people. First of all he had the support of Tukolor who emigrated from Futa Toro, his own homeland. The disturbed conditions resulting from the French intrusion also helped him. He also, it would seem, had the support of the slaves.

Expansion In 1850 he pushed northwards, and by 1854 the Bambara kingdom of Kaarta was in his hands. He then turned westwards towards the Senegal River, to the south of which his

own homeland of Futa Toro lay. His plans for expanding in this direction were, however, frustrated by the French presence at Medina and between 1857 and 1859 he tried unsuccessfully to dislodge them from their fortified post. He then turned away from the French and directed his attention to Segu to the southeast of Kaarta. By 1861 Segu, which was most sought after because of its position on the upper Niger River, fell to the jihad. Al-Hajj Umar did not stop there, and he then moved against Masina itself, taking it over in 1862; Timbuktu followed in 1863.

African and European scrambles meet Because al-Hajj Umar's jihad was one of deliberate conquest and forced conversion to Islam, it had the characteristics of a conquest state. His actions had aroused great bitterness in Segu and among the Bambara of the upper Senegal. In 1864 al-Hajj Umar was killed while suppressing Masina resistance to his rule. His son and successor, Ahmadu, inherited an unstable Segu and Masina, which he only partially succeeded in bringing under his control, and it took him the best part of a decade to effectively put his stamp on the area. The Tukolor had hardly established their hold on this area when the French began advancing into the western Sudan. The African and European scrambles came face to face.

French conquest of Tukolor empire As was shown in chapter 7, the French had already started making inroads into the outer reaches of the Tukolor empire before 1889. In 1890 Paris gave permission for an attack on Segu. By 1891 Segu was in French hands and Ahmadu was retreating rapidly as the French moved inexorably towards Timbuktu, which they entered in 1894, having conquered Jenne and Masina on the way. The French drive eastwards continued. In 1895 the Mossi states were taken and in 1899 the French forces were finally at Lake Chad.

French defeat Rabih The advance on Lake Chad came also from Algeria, Gabon and the French Congo. It was the drive from these last two areas that brought the French face to face with Rabih Zubayr. His kingdom was an off-shoot from al-Zubayr Rahma Mansur's secondary empire in the Bahr al-Ghazal. Rabih was one of Zubayr's subordinates, who in 1879 moved west with a well-equipped army into the land south of Wadai. His adventurous career suffered a setback when he was defeated by Wadai in 1887. The arms he depended on to maintain his position came from Benghazi and passed through Wadai on their way to him. With this route now closed to him Rabih moved westwards to Borno, which he conquered in 1894. Rabih may well have established one of the largest states south of the Sahara had it not been for the fact that the French, Germans and British were all converging on Lake Chad. It was the French threat that materialised. He held up French penetration for some seven years but he was finally defeated and killed in 1900, when three French expeditions, from Senegal, Algeria and the French Congo, converged on a point south of Lake Chad to attack him. Both Rabih and Lamy, the French commander, were killed. The area was finally partitioned between the British, French and Germans.

French conquests The French advance from Chad in 1902 brought the Sanusi into conflict with Europeans for the first time. They were unable to prevent the French from taking over Kanem, Tibesti and Wadai. There was widespread destruction of Sanusi zawiyas. But the core

of Sanusi strength lay in Cyrenaica and therefore beyond the limits of French expansion. It was the Italian move into Libya in 1911 that affected this core. In their conquest of the Sahara the French met with severe resistance from some of the desert peoples, such as the Moors of the western Sahara, and it was only in 1934 that the French completed the conquest of northern Mauritania. Not all the desert peoples were enemies and the French obtained the assistance of the Chaamba of the northern Sahara, Bedouin Arabs who earned their livelihood by raiding their neighbours. The French channelled their aggression into another avenue, arming the Chaamba and forming them in a camel corps. The constant internecine fighting between the Moors and the Tuaregs weakened both, making it easier for the French to conquer them. Early in the twentieth century the Tuaregs acknowledged French authority, but they later revolted; the unrest which spread to the central Sahara was not finally put down until 1919. By the end of the partitioning French territories bordered on Libya, Egypt and the Sudan in the east, and on the other side of the Sudan and Ethiopia they had French Somaliland.

Samory Touré The French drive to Lake Chad was only one line of expansion. They also moved in a southerly direction from Bamako on the upper Niger to attack the empire of Samory Touré. Apart from the Sokoto caliphate and the Tukolor empire, there was one other major West African empire created in the African scramble in the interior in the nineteenth century. The Dyula conquest state of Samory Touré (it is also sometimes referred to as the Mandinka state) was to the south of the Tukolor empire. Between Futa Jallon in the west, the Tukolor empire to the northeast and the forests in the south, in an area that is now part of eastern Guinea and southern Mali, there were large numbers of Mande-speaking peoples, who had earlier been part of the powerful Mali kingdom. Both the Mandinka and the Malinke were branches of this Mande-speaking group. The many petty chieftainships did not form a united country prior to the appearance of Samory Touré on the scene. Samory was born in 1830 into a non-Muslim Dyula (Dyula is the collective name for Soninke, Mandinka and Malinke trading groups) trading family to the east of Futa Jallon, in the vicinity of the upper Niger basin. As a trader in his youth Samory gained a valuable insight into the surrounding countryside through which he travelled. He abandoned his trading activities when his mother was taken in a slave raid and carried off into captivity. Samory attached himself to the chief who had bought his mother and prepared to work until he could ransom her. While he was here, he obtained a name for himself as a warrior of some daring and skill and, when his mother had been freed, he turned his attention to building up a following of adventurous young men, and began moving outwards, between 1865 and 1875 conquering numerous states as he carved out a massive new state in the western Sudan – only the Sokoto caliphate and the Tukolor empire were bigger. The unity that he created greatly facilitated trade.

Promotion of Islam as a unifying element The creation of this state was not the result of a jihad. Samory had converted to Islam during his trading years, but he was not activated by the same reforming zeal as some of his contemporaries. He seems to have regarded Islam primarily as a tool to bring a degree of cultural uniformity into the diverse cultural configuration of peoples he was welding into an empire. So he promoted Islam and encouraged the abandonment of

traditional religious practices, even going so far as to order the destruction of many of the symbols of the old traditional religion and their replacement with the symbols of Islam. Muslim education was promoted, mosques were built and Islamic law became the basis for his rule. Of course his relegation of traditional beliefs and practices to a secondary position was bitterly resented by the custodians of the old ways.

Military strength Islam was a unifying element in his empire. The strength of his army was also crucial. He succeeded in securing the loyalty of many of his soldiers through his practice of incorporating male captives into the army rather than selling them as slaves. Modern breech-loading repeating rifles were imported through Freetown. Samory was a gifted organiser but he was so busy defending his empire against outside attack that he had little time to devote to strengthening the internal bonds and administration of his farflung empire.

African scramble interrupted Samory was still expanding and forming his empire, when he came up against the French, who were extending their empire from Senegal to the western Sudan. Here was a classic case of the African scramble being interrupted by the European scramble. The Mandinka had their first clash with the French in 1881. When he had begun to carve out his state, there had been no European threat. The British in Sierra Leone had no plans to expand inland. But then in 1879 the first signs of future problems were heralded by the French military advance to the east from Senegal. At the same time Samory was moving down the Niger valley, and the French and Samory both arrived before Bamako in 1883. After a few skirmishes, the two agreed to a truce in 1886–1887. This suited the French who were consolidating their grip on the north. Samory expanded further eastward into the modern Ivory Coast.

Samory's second empire In 1891 the French were free once more to concentrate on Samory and they opened their attack on him in earnest from Bamako on the upper Niger. Between 1891 and 1894 the French advanced and Samory withdrew. Samory realised that he would not be able to hold his own against French artillery fire and would not stand a chance in a pitched battle. He thus adopted guerrilla tactics and held up the French advance by attacking their supply lines and ambushing small detachments. He did not need his whole army for these operations, and some of his trained soldiers who were not involved in fighting the French were expanding his empire to the east as they conquered other polities. When the French drove him from the upper Niger, he was able to re-establish his government in the more recently incorporated parts of his empire. Samory thus conquered a second empire, all the time resisting the French drive.

Conquest state By 1896 Samory's new empire took in the northern half of the modern Ivory Coast and extended eastward across a large part of northern Ghana. But this second empire was different from the first. He was no longer creating a Muslim state; he was conquering people and exacting tribute from them. Samory did not have the united support of his empire behind him. He had to pay for the horses and guns to fight the French by selling slaves, and he raided far and wide in search of slaves to sell. As the French drove him steadily eastwards, he devastated the country from which he retired so there would be nothing left in it that the French could use. As the French closed in on him, he became

more ruthless, savagely crushing any signs of opposition to his rule. He razed the town of Kong to the ground after a group of people had worked with the French.

Samory's final defeat

Although the costs were great, the French pursued Samory relentlessly. In 1898 he was captured by a French column and sent to Gabon, where he died in 1900. Samory's resistance was largely responsible for preventing the French from making further conquests in West Africa at a time when the British were not interested in formal empire. By the time that Samory had eventually been defeated and the French could advance, the British had begun to accept the responsibility for a formal empire. So Samory played a vital role in the final shaping of the partition map of Africa.

Favourable effects of the jihads

Although the disruption to society and loss of life that accompanied the jihads has been stressed, the other side of the coin is that in many cases they brought about political stability, which had a favourable effect on trade and generally stimulated the economy. They brought a new governing class into power. The jihads also established Islam more firmly in West Africa and on a purely cultural level gave a boost to literacy. Usman dan Fodio, Mohammed Bello and al-Hajj Umar had written books setting forth their views on Islam and the way it should be ordered. Large libraries were established in Segou and Sokoto. In the areas affected by the jihads, a feeling of Islamic solidarity emerged that was different from those areas where Islam was weak. This had implications for the later history of West Africa. Although European powers took over this region, the work done by the jihads remained intact. Hiskett writes that 'One manifestation of this is that in the course of the political prelude to West African independence, the "jihad areas", especially northern Nigeria, tended to be pan-Islamic in their aspirations, in contrast to the pan-Africanism of non-Islamic areas. Sometimes, too, the heritage of the jihads accustomed Islamic populations to assume superiority over non-Muslims, which made it difficult for them to adjust to a situation in which political power passed, either wholly or partially, to non-Muslims at independence.'⁵

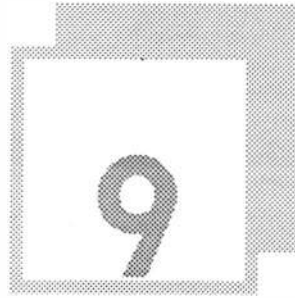
Realignment

There are other situations too that could be considered to be part of an African partition of Africa. We have talked about the expansion of an existing state in North Africa (Egypt), the formation of a large state in Northeast Africa (Ethiopia), and the establishment of three large empires in the western Sudan of West Africa. The expansion and formation of these states brought about the break-up and incorporation of existing smaller polities and entities. Disintegration is thus also a part of the African scramble for Africa. In the nineteenth century in the region of the Niger delta there were also tremendous upheavals and new alignments resulting from the collapse of the old Oyo empire. The expanding Sokoto caliphate incorporated some of the northern parts of the Oyo empire. A good deal of realignment occurred in areas particularly to the west of the Oyo empire.

Notes

- 1 R. Oliver, 'The partition of Africa: The European and the African interpretations', African History Seminar, School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, 16 October 1985, p. 8.

- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 3 K. Shillington, *History of Africa*, p. 314.
- 4 M. Hiskett, 'The nineteenth-century jihads in West Africa', in J. Flint (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 5, *From c. 1790 to c. 1870*, p. 151.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 168.



International rivalry and the final phase of the partitioning

**Major
areas
of ri-
valry
until
1884**

Egypt

International rivalry played a major role in determining the structure of colonial Africa. Of course such rivalry was not limited to the final phases of the partitioning and it was a driving force of some strength in the events leading up to the Berlin Conference. Until 1884 the rivalry was mostly between Britain and France, and Germany encouraged rather than challenged the pursuit by France of expansion in Africa. Although there was some friction between Britain and Germany, for the most part Britain did not object to Bismarck's colonial ventures. Anglo-French rivalry in the period up to 1884 centred on Egypt and West Africa. The humiliation France suffered in Egypt in 1882 continued to rankle among certain sections of the French civil service and army, and the issue was not finally resolved until 1898. But the desire for revenge was not an all-consuming desire of the French government, although at various times between 1882 and 1898 the government frequently contained ministers who were highly sympathetic to the aim of embarrassing Britain in Northeast Africa. And certainly, no French government before 1898 felt constrained to cooperate with Britain in Egypt and to ease its problems in managing the Egyptian economy.

- Niger delta** In West Africa Anglo-French rivalry first made itself manifest in the French Congo in 1882, and it was French interest in the lower Niger and Benue rivers from 1883 that decided Britain to formalise its informal interests in the Niger delta and declare a protectorate. The one area where French influence was being formally, if not officially extended, was in Senegambia and the western Sudan. There was not much Anglo-French competition here, although the French were ultra-sensitive to any movement made by the British in Sierra Leone, expecting an advance into their field of expansion. French army officers on the spot were not averse to blowing the slightest British activity out of proportion and to interpreting this to the government in Paris as a direct challenge to French interests, even though there was no real threat. This heightened sensitivity was due in part to the Anglophobia of sections of the French forces, but it was in part also a calculated ploy, for they knew that there was no more certain manner in which to push a reluctant government into spending money on expansion than to represent this as necessary to prevent Britain from intruding on French interests.
- Lagos** French representatives also eyed the British in Lagos suspiciously. There was some slight basis for this as the British had from time to time over the years thought of joining Lagos and the Gold Coast together, and in the 1870s there had been discussions between the French and British to arrange such a deal. In 1883 fear of British moves in this direction caused the French to renew an old protectorate over Porto Novo. But by 1884 neither Britain nor France had any real plans for extending formal influence into the interior in this direction.
- Bismarck exploits rivalry** These were the main areas of rivalry by 1884, but Anglo-French rivalry manifested itself in many other ways, for example in the attempts by France at the Berlin Conference to destroy exclusive British control on the lower Niger. And of course Bismarck was keen to fuel the fires of Anglo-French rivalry, although by the end of the Berlin Conference he was beginning to tire of the exercise as Franco-German interests increasingly diverged. As far as Germany is concerned, although it became involved in some minor rivalry with Britain in East Africa, its main role was to attempt to drive a wedge between Britain and France. It has been said that Bismarck's map of Africa lay in Europe, but even after his departure from the scene in 1890, European diplomacy, rather than African interests themselves, played a major role in determining German attitudes towards African issues, although after 1890 the German touch was by no means so sure and subtle as it had been while Bismarck was at the helm.
- British reluctance to take formal control** Up to 1884, and for a number of years after that, the powers remained reluctant to push forward and appropriate the African interior. Only the threat of action from its rival could spur England or France into making a move. In the case of Britain the reluctance of the government to take control saw it engage in attempts to find others who would protect British interests from the French. Thus in the early 1880s British fears that the French would cut off British trade by setting up tariffs at the Congo mouth caused Britain to recognise Portuguese claims to the mouth of the river. In the period between 1885 and 1890, when British interests in West as well as East and Central Africa were threatened and some action seemed desirable, the British resorted to the expedient of granting charters to British companies in order to protect British interests, and thus

relieve the government of the burden of administering new territories. The period between 1886 and 1890 was the era of the chartered companies. In some cases where there were no companies Britain would throw its weight behind one power in order to keep out another potential rival. In 1881 it had encouraged the French to take Tunisia, rather than have Italy dominate both sides of the Mediterranean. Later, in Northeast Africa, Britain encouraged Italian occupation in order to forestall a strengthening of German power.

**French
expansion
from
1889**

After the Berlin Conference, France was the first of the European powers to resume a policy of active colonial expansion. From about 1889 the pace of the partitioning gathered momentum. Partly as a result of the increasing importance of the Colonial Department – which in March 1889 was transferred from the Ministry of Marine and Colonies to the Ministry of Commerce, where interest and control over it were not as strong as they had been previously – expansionist initiatives from official quarters in France gathered strength. The enthusiastic imperialist Eugène Etienne was under-colonial secretary from 1887 to 1888, and after a short break, from 1889 to 1892, and was able to throw his weight behind the expansion of France's African empire. 'The temper of French colonial policy was about to change,' Hargreaves writes. 'Indeed, Britain was fortunate to have concluded this agreement [the convention of 1889] before Etienne became fully entrenched in his new appointment.'¹

**Change
in British
policy**

For Britain the change came much later. Joseph Chamberlain, who came to office in 1895 as colonial secretary, gave expression to the aggressive nationalism that infused the scramble for Africa with a new spirit. So France was vigorously expanding in West Africa for a number of years before the British did so officially.

**Aggressive
imperialism**

As the partitioning progressed, it underwent a transformation. This was partly because of the nature of the partitioning process itself, and partly because of the situation in Europe. Conflict increased in Africa as the interior came more under European control: conflict with African polities, and conflict between the interests of European powers. And both types of conflicts were given impetus by the nationalistic climate of intense rivalry and competition that existed in Europe. In the early part of the partition the elites in the government dominated the process, and they were very conscious of not spending taxpayers' money on African adventures. Action was therefore restricted and so were the number of Europeans present in Africa. But this all changed. By the later 1890s there was an aggressive spirit of imperialism abroad. Whereas earlier partition had been confined to parts of North Africa and to West Africa, within a few years of the Berlin Conference it was extended to the rest of Africa, thus immeasurably complicating issues. Nationalism was the reason that international rivalry and competition became the preserves of the masses, instead of being confined to the elites in the rarified atmosphere of the corridors of government power. Towards the end of the scramble this rivalry resulted in a change in perceptions of colonial issues that was at great variance with the early moves in the process. This change was reflected in incidents such as the Fashoda crisis, where for some time Britain and France faced each other over a narrow abyss of war, while the British taxpayer happily acquiesced in the expenditure of vast

sums of money for British troops to conquer the Sudan and build a railway line which no exports could possibly hope to pay for.

ANGLO-FRENCH RIVALRY IN WEST AFRICA

**British
anger
over
boundaries**

French expansion in the western and central Sudan was opposed by indigenous states, and there was no serious rivalry with other European nations. But elsewhere in West Africa a degree of Anglo-French rivalry was present in virtually every area. At the time of the Anglo-French convention of 1889 Britain seemed unconcerned about the hinterlands of Gambia and Sierra Leone. This soon changed. According to W. G. Hynes, at the end of 1891 metropolitan business circles were horrified when they suddenly realised that the government had forever circumscribed the limits of Sierra Leone by agreeing to the 1889 convention. In truth the damage had been done earlier when Britain had not objected to the establishment of a French protectorate over Futa Jallon; in addition, the British had also recognised the validity of the French protectorate over Samory in 1887. Although they could not remedy the situation, in the 1890s the British pushed inland as far they could, making their authority effective in that area that had hitherto been outside their control. This was not accomplished without some fierce resistance.

Méline

Hynes believes that the anger of business interests at the end of 1891 when they realised how the government had allowed Sierra Leone to be cut off from the interior, 'marked a significant turning point in the partition of West Africa. Coinciding as it did with the beginnings of another slump in British exports and news of the Méline tariff in France, it produced a sharp outcry in commercial circles. If there was nothing to be done to recover what had been "lost" in the area of Sierra Leone, the principal chambers of commerce were determined that the Sierra Leone experience would not be repeated elsewhere in West Africa. A commercial campaign to extend British influence into the West African interior developed at the beginning of 1892.'²

**Com-
mercial
pressure**

This new situation coincided with another slump in the British economy from 1890 to 1894, and by now businessmen were no longer so confident that they would be able to open up new markets themselves without government intervention. In the new mood of aggressive nationalism and international rivalry in Europe, the government was beginning to realise that the nation's interests would have to be defended everywhere in the world and not only in Europe, and so they were more inclined to heed the pleas of mercantile pressure groups. This was true also of France and it was when European politics and rivalry became caught up with expansion in Africa that colonialism became a major popular force in France.

**Limited
govern-
ment
res-
ponse**

It is uncertain whether commercial groups in England had anything to do with his decision but in March 1892 Lord Salisbury seemed to realise that the Anglo-French convention of 1889 was not a sufficient safeguard for British interests on the Gold Coast. He gave instructions for treaties to be concluded with the chiefs to the north of the Asante, in which they agreed not to accept any other power's protection without first consulting the British and obtaining their consent. Even this very limited step was taken reluctantly and only because of the threat from France. Business pressure groups were

becoming more important, but the British government still refused to heed their pleas to subjugate the Asante on the grounds that they were hindering the development of trade. The government maintained that the 1889 convention was an adequate guarantee as far as the Asante themselves were concerned.

Samory buys time for the British British reluctance in the early 1890s to take decisive steps in the Gold Coast interior would have had serious consequences for British interests had it not been for the stubborn resistance of Samory to the French. This was true also of Nigeria. Professor Fage has pointed out that Samory delayed the French 'and helped produce a different balance in the partition between France and Britain east of Timbuctu. French forces were not established in Borgu (which they approached from the south, not from the west) until 1894, or in Mossi territory until 1896. There was thus time for British commercial interests to persuade the Colonial Office to enter into treaty relations with the African rulers in the hinterland of the Gold Coast and Ashanti, and for these interests themselves, in the form of Goldie's agents, to secure treaties in what was to become the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and even to begin to try and occupy this sizeable territory.'³

Asante protectorate In the end it was the combination of the French threat and the appointment in 1895 of Joseph Chamberlain as colonial secretary that marked a change in British attitudes. In September 1895 Chamberlain made the decision that the Asante asantehene should be compelled to accept a British resident at his court as outwardly visible proof of British protection. At long last Asante was invaded and declared a British protectorate in 1896.

France threatens Lagos interior It was in the region of Dahomey and Nigeria that Anglo-French rivalry in West Africa reached its height in the 1890s. In 1892 France invaded Dahomey, and then started expanding northwards in order to occupy the navigable part of the Niger River below the Bussa rapids. This plan threatened the Niger Company's monopoly. In terms of the 1889 convention the French agreed not to interfere south of a line drawn between Say on the Niger and Lake Chad. But the convention did not determine the western borders of the British sphere of influence from Say to the coast, and France moved into this area, threatening the Lagos hinterland.

French threat repelled For years merchant bodies had unsuccessfully been applying pressure on the British government to act against the Ijebu who had closed the trade route from the coast to the interior. The French threat finally moved the British government, and in May 1892 the Ijebu were attacked and defeated. The signing of more treaties in Yorubaland led to the whole of this region coming under British influence in 1896 and the threat from the French being warded off. Hallett writes that: 'In few parts of Africa was the coming of alien rule so cordially welcomed, for the Yoruba were exhausted by their internal dissensions and many communities had suffered gravely from the closing of trade routes and from the banditry and slave-raiding or kidnapping that flourished during the country's endemic state of insecurity.'⁴

Royal Niger Co. The new situation also affected Goldie's Royal Niger Company. The company had been given a charter so that it could look after British interests without involving the government in any direct financial or military commitment, but as it became clear that

it could no longer do so, its usefulness drew to an end. On 1 January 1891 the Oil Rivers Protectorate was reorganised as the Niger Coast Protectorate, after it became clear that the British merchants in the area were not prepared for Goldie's charter to be extended there. They were afraid that he would try to monopolise trade here in the way that he had done further upstream. By the mid-1890s metropolitan business interests were vociferous critics of Goldie's exclusive trading practices. Chamberlain had little time for company rule. He believed that the state should take the lead and, instead of the purely negative aim of excluding rivals, a new, positive attempt should be made to open new areas and markets. The company's main sin was that it was unable to effectively occupy the country to which it had obtained 'rights'.

Failure to impose authority

In 1894 and 1895 relations between Lagos, and Nupe and Ilorin, the two most southern-most emirates of the Sokoto caliphate, north of the Ijebu, became increasingly strained. The British government demanded that the company make its authority effective there, but despite a successful attack on Ilorin in February 1897, the company lacked the resources to impose an effective administration on Nupe and Ilorin and was forced to withdraw without doing so.

Failure to meet French threat

But more serious than this failure was the inability of the company to prevent the French from expanding from northern Dahomey to Borgu. If the French obtained territory to the south of the Bussa rapids, which was the last obstacle to navigation on the Niger, this would have serious consequences for the company's monopoly. The 1889 convention that defined the boundary between Lagos and Dahomey did not do so for much more than 150 km inland. Between the limits agreed upon in 1889 and 1890 – in which the French recognised as a British sphere the area south of a line drawn from Say on the upper Niger to Barruwa on Lake Chad – there was a large area not covered by these agreements. This was Borgu. There was nothing to stop the French from approaching from the west. Although the French had recognised Goldie's 1885 treaty with the sultan of Sokoto, they maintained that the sultan did not have rights over Borgu, that the real sovereign of Borgu was the king of Nikki. In 1894 a French expedition raced to Nikki to sign a treaty, but they were beaten by a few days by Frederick Lugard, who led a Royal Niger Company expedition to the area. The French contested the legality of Lugard's treaty with the king of Nikki, as well as other treaties he signed, and continued to press ahead.

Salisbury's desire for conciliation

Salisbury would have liked to avoid the tensions building up here, but early in 1897 Chamberlain began placing increasing pressure on the prime minister. Because he wanted to keep Chamberlain in his cabinet, Salisbury was forced to compromise, despite the fact that he and many of his cabinet ministers were not at all happy with the initiatives of 'Pushful Joe'. By conciliating France rather than running the risk of alienating it, he could also indirectly conciliate Russia and so diminish pressure on the Mediterranean, India and China.

Chamberlain

In the middle of 1897 Chamberlain obtained a fairly free hand to oppose the French in the Niger bend. In February 1898 the West African Frontier Force, paid for by the British government and led by Lugard, went into the Lagos hinterland to occupy as much



Africa at the end of partitioning, 1913

territory as it possibly could without actually provoking a war with France. Chamberlain was prepared to meet force with force and in Lugard he had a military commander who had a great belief in the efficacy of military conquest.

**Niger
Con-
ven-
tion,
1898**

In May and June 1898 the West African Frontier Force and the French army in Borgu stood face to face. War was a distinct possibility, but the matter was settled at the conference table in the Niger Convention of 14 June 1898. Bargaining on the fact that the French would not be prepared to go to war and that Lugard had a strong force in the area, Chamberlain put pressure on the French. Borgu was divided between Britain and France; the French retained Nikki but were excluded from the navigable part of the Niger below Bussa.

**End of
Royal
Niger
Com-
pany**

Chamberlain had for some time decided to dispense with the company's services, but he could not do this straight away as it was necessary to keep in force the various treaties that the company had made with local chiefs in order to bolster the British government's position at the talks with the French. After the 1898 agreement these treaties were no longer important and the company disappeared in December 1899. On 1 January 1900 the British government assumed direct responsibility for the protectorate of Northern Nigeria.

**British
auth-
ority es-
tablish-
ed**

Parts of this vast area had not been subjected to European control and between 1900 and 1903 Lugard broke the power of the Sokoto caliphate. In the northeastern parts, where Rabih had held sway after his conquest of Borno, his defeat by the French in 1900 left a power vacuum, and British authority was established without a recourse to arms. In the more remote areas in difficult terrain, the emirs were persuaded, partly by arguments and partly by threats, to accept British authority.

ANGLO-PORTUGUESE FRICTION AND THE ENTRY OF CECIL RHODES

**Portu-
guese
threat
to Brit-
ish in-
terests**

North of the Zambezi River British interests were represented mainly by missionaries, who made repeated appeals for help against the growing power of Mlozi in the Nyasa area. Salisbury, however, was not overly concerned with what was happening in the Nyasa region. He was far more interested in Mashonaland and Matabeleland to the south of the Zambezi, as he wanted to reserve these areas for future Cape expansion, which would help strengthen British influence in southern Africa and tilt the balance of power within South Africa in favour of the Cape and against the Transvaal. He did not want to establish protectorates there – all he wanted to do was to keep others out. This policy was, however, being threatened by the unexpected vigour being shown by the Portuguese.

**Econ-
omic
prob-
lems:
Angola**

The Portuguese had had colonies in Africa for a long time, but had done very little to develop them. The colonies had relied heavily on the slave trade and when this came to an end they were in dire straits. The government in Portugal could do little to assist them. In Angola a number of attempts were made to raise money locally by extending the boundaries of the colony and taxing the newly incorporated peoples. However, the cost of keeping garrisoned forts in the conquered territories exceeded by far the income

from this source, and by 1870 the only part of Angola that was firmly in Portuguese hands was the immediate hinterland of Luanda and Benguela.

Portuguese exploration

In Mozambique, Portuguese authority was confined to a few ports and trading posts up the Zambezi. Under these unpromising circumstances it made no economic sense at all to maintain the colonies, but, to the Portuguese, expansion in Africa was very much a matter of prestige. In 1875 the Geographical Society of Lisbon was formed, and its African committee did much to publicise Portugal's historical role in Africa and restore pride in Portuguese exploration. The society organised numerous expeditions, and between 1877 and 1885 Portuguese travellers, among whom was Serpa Pinto, journeyed over much of Central Africa.

Hopes of linking Angola and Mozambique

Portugal had dreams of creating an empire right across Africa, of linking up Angola and Mozambique. It seemed a feasible idea. After all, Portuguese traders operated throughout Central Africa; there had been trans-continental trade for some time. The British government did not want to assume responsibility in Central Africa, and in 1881 Whitehall was not overly concerned at the thought of Portugal occupying Blantyre, so long as guarantees could be obtained that British subjects and property would be safe. Government officials concentrated not on preventing Portuguese penetration, but on obtaining freedom for commerce in the interior. Although the Portuguese had done very little to develop either Angola or Mozambique, they nevertheless regarded the Lake Nyasa area as coming within their sphere of influence. By 1883 British governing circles were less sanguine about Portuguese expansion than they had been two years earlier, and in that year the British consul at Mozambique explored the country around Lake Shirwa and found that Portuguese half-castes were extending Portuguese influence as far inland as the lakes. They were attracting a great deal of trade as they were prepared to supply guns and powder in return for slaves, which the British at Blantyre would not do.

Salisbury's attitude to Portuguese expansion

The British government may not have been very concerned about Portuguese activity, but by the early 1880s there were over 100 European missionaries, most of them Protestants, and they were very worried about the possibility of Portugal extending her authority in the region between Angola and Mozambique. By the second half of the 1880s the Portuguese were sending out numerous expeditions – many of them, ironically enough, financed by British businessmen – to sign treaties with chiefs in the interior. Although this activity worried the Protestant missionaries in the area south of Lake Nyasa, who feared exclusion if the area came under Portuguese control, Salisbury began to think in terms of making an arrangement with the Portuguese, although he knew that if he did not act here and allowed the Scottish mission field to come under the auspices of the Portuguese Catholics, he would lose the support of the Presbyterian vote in Scotland. Portuguese claims north of the Zambezi would be admitted if the Portuguese would recognise the area south of the river as a British sphere of influence. This would of course mean abandoning the British missionaries around Lake Nyasa, but Salisbury in any case had no intention of assuming control of the Lake Nyasa region to please the missionaries. His main objective was to secure Mashonaland and Matabeleland as a British sphere, and to accomplish this he was prepared to allow the

missionaries to be included in the Portuguese sphere of influence. But while Salisbury was contemplating such a deal, Cecil Rhodes arrived in London at the end of March 1889 and what he had to propose changed Salisbury's thinking.

Salisbury and Rhodes: mutual interests

Rhodes had had his eye on the country north of the Limpopo River for some time and, armed with a concession to the mineral rights of the country acquired by his agents from Lobengula, he went to England to obtain a charter for a company to occupy, develop and administer the interior. He would do this at no cost at all to the British government. Not only would Rhodes occupy the area south of the Zambezi, but he had plans for the region north of the Zambezi as well. All of this dovetailed very nicely with Salisbury's own plans for interfering with the balance of power between the republican north and the colonial south and with the policy of hemming in and isolating the Transvaal. Salisbury would after all not have to negotiate with the Portuguese. He would not have to abandon the Nyasa missions to Portugal. Salisbury knew that Rhodes's plans were part of a Cape-to-Cairo ideal that Rhodes shared with Harry Johnston, one of Britain's more imperially minded consuls. Salisbury himself was not a great supporter of the Cape-to-Cairo ideal. Lord Rosebery was, and so were the Foreign Office experts. Salisbury's attitude was that if he could do something to satisfy those to whom this ideal meant so much then he would do so, provided that it did not conflict with any really important British interests as he saw them.

British South Africa Company

Although Rhodes had hoped that the charter he had asked for would include Bechuanaland and the Nyasa region, in deference to the missionaries and philanthropists the British government excluded these two regions from the charter. Rhodes would, however, pay for the policing and administration of the Nyasa region. The charter, which was issued on 29 October 1889, gave the British South Africa Company wide financial and administrative powers over a huge and vaguely defined area north of Bechuanaland, north and west of the Transvaal and west of the Portuguese dominions. No limits were laid down in the north and west.

Harry Johnston

Rhodes discovered that Harry Johnston, who was about to set off for the Nyasa region to take up the post of British consul, shared his ideal of extending the British empire northwards and he gave Johnston £2 000 so that he could take a wider view of his task than the small allowance provided by the British government would permit. Johnston was responsible for the whole of the British sphere north of the Zambezi (the modern states of Malawi and Zambia). It was an enormous task, complicated by the fact that he was serving two masters.

End of war with Mlozi

The situation in the vicinity of Lake Nyasa was very unstable. Mlozi was still wreaking havoc around Lake Nyasa when Johnston arrived. In the second half of 1889 Johnston made treaties with the chiefs west of Lake Nyasa and succeeded in bringing the war with Mlozi to an end. Considering the small means at his disposal, Johnson's achievement was remarkable. Although he had only 70 Sikhs and 80 Zanzibaris with whom to bring a vast area under control, within the space of five years he laid the basis for the administration of the protectorate and broke the power of the slave raiders. Mlozi was finally defeated at the end of 1895. This was not Johnston's only military operation and

in the 1890s he had military engagements with the Yao, Swahili-Arabs, Chewa and Ngoni.

Nyasa-land But he could not use military means to persuade a determined Serpa Pinto and his Portuguese expedition to cease their activities south of Lake Nyasa. The Portuguese withdrew only after the British government sent Lisbon an ultimatum in January 1890, and the Nyasa region was proclaimed as the British Central African Protectorate (later renamed Nyasaland) in 1889. This decision, by a British government normally highly reluctant to undertake any new formal responsibilities, was made easier by the fact that Rhodes would pay for the administration of the protectorate. The British government did little more than meet the salary of Johnston, who was appointed commissioner and consul-general in the British sphere north of the Zambezi. The company stopped subsidising the protectorate only in 1895.

Anglo-Portuguese agreement In their attempts to enlarge their colonial boundaries, the Portuguese were further frustrated by the Anglo-Portuguese agreement of June 1891. It was because of the friendly relations between England and Germany at that stage that Britain was able to impose on the isolated Portugal a settlement she bitterly resented.⁵

Lobengula and the drift to war; Pioneer Column While all of this was taking place north of the Zambezi, the main thrust of company activity was being directed to the territory south of the Zambezi. Lobengula understood his agreement with Rhodes's agents to mean that a few prospectors would enter his land and dig some holes. He had not been led to expect a Pioneer Column of 180 settlers and some 500 members of the British South Africa Police who in September 1890 raised the British flag at Fort Salisbury in Mashonaland. Lobengula was incensed when he discovered that he had been tricked and that the whites intended to settle permanently in the Matabele's traditional raiding grounds. It was not long before tension between the Matabele and the settlers reached breaking point. This bothered Rhodes, who feared its effects on the company's shares in London. Besides this, many people believed that rich deposits of gold, far more than had thus far been found in Mashonaland, were waiting to be uncovered in Matabeleland. Lobengula's hostile attitude prevented prospecting. So Rhodes did nothing to stop the drift to war.

War against the Matabele and Shona Hostilities broke out in 1893. Within a few short weeks the power of the Matabele was shattered and their capital was in company hands. In January 1894 Lobengula died away from home, a hunted fugitive. This was not the end of the reckoning with the Matabele. In March 1896 a revolt broke out and within a few months it spread to Mashonaland. By this time the Shona had a number of grievances against their new rulers, including the confiscation of cattle and land and the introduction of harsh taxes. The Shona continued the struggle after the Matabele had acknowledged defeat, but in 1897 they too bowed to the inevitable, and the rebellion was brought to an end.

EGYPT AND THE WATERS OF THE NILE

Withdrawal For a number of years after 1882 Britain regarded her presence in Egypt as temporary. It intended withdrawing as soon as it could establish an acceptable government and put Egyptian finances in order, so that its investments would be safe. But this proved

very difficult to achieve. Although Britain's oft-expressed intentions to withdraw were no doubt genuine, as Hopkins states, 'Britain had important interests to defend in Egypt and she was prepared to withdraw only if conditions guaranteeing the security of those interests were met – and they never were.' The Liberal government stayed there 'because those members of the government who had pushed Gladstone into Egypt were not going to let him out until their aims had been achieved'. They were helped in this by Baring, who became consul-general in Egypt in 1883. 'Baring's programme of administrative and financial reforms was very similar to that proposed by the nationalists. But Baring delivered what the nationalists could not: confidence and reliability. Britain's formal presence in Egypt provided a guarantee which attracted investment and opened opportunities to foreign enterprise ... Staying on suited all those in the metropole who had pressed for occupation. The causes of entry ensured that there would be no quick exit.'⁶

**With-
drawal
formu-
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jected**

Various formulas for withdrawal were devised, but none of them satisfied the French. Although they wanted Britain to withdraw as the British presence in Egypt was a constant reminder of their humiliation, they would not agree to any arrangement that left a loophole for Britain to re-occupy the country if it became necessary in the future, or which envisaged the return of Egypt to the Ottoman Turks. France felt that this would set a bad precedent for the French colonies of Algeria and Tunisia, which had also formerly been Turkish possessions. There were also limits to the pressure that could be applied, for French investments were being well looked after in Egypt, while French cultural influence, which was very strong there, continued to expand. With the stability provided by the British occupation, French investors wanted to put their money into Egypt rather than take it out.⁷

**New at-
titude
to Egypt**

Around 1887–1888 Salisbury began to think that Britain should after all not be in such a hurry to leave Egypt. There were signs of a growing alliance between Russia and France, and British influence in Constantinople had clearly declined. Salisbury still hoped to prevent Turkey from being partitioned, but he saw that this might not be possible, in which case he would have to fall back on Cairo for the defence of the Levant. And if Britain was faced with serious French hostility there would be no hope of containing Russia at the Straits. By 1889 Salisbury had come to a firm decision that for the foreseeable future Britain would have to remain in Egypt.

**Import-
ance of
the Nile**

This meant that the Nile would have to be protected, for without its life-giving water the Fertile Crescent would be a desert. In order to secure this water supply and ensure that it was not interfered with by rivals, British interest in the areas through which the Nile ran increased. Thus the Sudan was seen in a new light, as were the sources of the Nile in the Ethiopian highlands (Blue Nile) and Lake Victoria (White Nile). Despite the lack of stone or other building material anywhere along the course of the Nile, groups in France had spoken about the possibility of damming up the Nile and so starving Egypt, without spelling out how exactly it could be done. Today we know that no European power at the time possessed the sort of technical expertise that would have been required to do this, but the threat nevertheless appeared real to the late Victorians.

Strategic value questioned This new attitude towards Egypt changed the picture with regard to Northeast and East Africa, particularly with regard to the Sudan and to Uganda. But as in the case of Egypt and the British occupation of it in 1882, historians today approach the question of the Nile strategy with caution. How important was this Nile strategy? In 1894 Lord Rosebery failed to obtain French and German assent to a British plan for the lease from Leopold of a corridor between lakes Edward and Tanganyika which would have been an important link in the attempt to realise the Cape-to-Cairo dream. He then made an unsuccessful attempt to persuade the French to recognise the upper Nile as a British sphere. But what the French were prepared to do was to give an undertaking that they would not enter the upper Nile region if Britain agreed to do the same. The price of agreeing to this would be some territorial concessions in West Africa. If Britain had been thinking purely in terms of strategy this would have solved the problem, which was its fear of a French challenge in this area. But Rosebery was not prepared to make territorial sacrifices in West Africa or to contemplate the territorial concessions that would be required on the upper Nile if he agreed with this proposal.⁸ In other words, the strategic significance of the upper Nile region, although important, was not so great that it could override all other considerations.

Strategic factors versus commercial options In 1986 Hopkins also downplayed the significance of the Nile strategy. Robinson and Gallagher believed that strategic factors played a vital role in the partition and that the key to the British presence in large parts of Africa was Egypt with its position on the route to India and its suitability as a base for the defence of British Mediterranean interests. According to them the strategic importance of Egypt and the eastern part of Africa (for the defence of Egypt eventually involved Britain in the defence of the sources of the Nile in the Sudan and Uganda) far outweighed the more promising commercial prospects in West Africa. 'Nothing is more striking,' they write, 'about the selection of British claims in tropical Africa between 1882 and 1895 than the emphasis on the east and the comparative indifference to the west. The British chose to concentrate on the Nile and its approaches. Their over-riding concern was not with tropical Africa as such but with security in the Mediterranean and the Orient ... The neglect of West African claims on the other hand, shows a relative indifference to tropical African commercial gains. Trade prospects had always seemed better in western than in the eastern regions ... Yet it was not these commercial options that the late-Victorians were most anxious to claim. They preferred to make the empire safer in poorer east Africa than to make it wealthier in the richer west.'⁹

An alternative view-point Hopkins has queried the above conclusion. He believes that 'A reassessment of the Foreign Office memoranda on which Robinson and Gallagher rest so much of this part of their case shows that East Africa's strategic importance was considered not in relation to the Canal but in relation to the Cape ... Furthermore, the Foreign Office and sundry business interests regarded East Africa primarily as a land of economic opportunity; hence their emphasis on the interior, and not merely on the coast, on the potential for white settlement, and on the wealth which might be generated more readily there than West Africa, where disappointments were more familiar. Egypt played little part in these calculations.'¹⁰ In other words, although Northeast and East Africa were important, it was not only because of the strategic value of the upper Nile, but also because of

the hope of economic rewards in East Africa and the desire to keep the region available for expansion from the Cape.

Sudanese opposition to Egypt

To the south of Egypt lay the Sudan. It was nominally under the control of Egypt, but opposition to this in the Sudan itself was very strong. Religious idealists were upset when the Turko-Egyptian government brought in non-Sudanese teachers, ignoring the Sudanese teachers; they did not like the way that Christians such as Baker and Gordon were given authority. The livelihood of many Sudanese came from the slave trade and they were bitterly opposed to the vigorous campaign against that trade conducted by Baker and Gordon. Mohammed Ahmad, the son of a Dongola boatbuilder, succeeded in uniting this opposition to Egyptian rule, and in 1881 he let it be known that he was the Mahdi of the Muslim prophesies, the one whom God had sent to bring justice to the world and overthrow foreign oppressors.

The Mahdist revolution

The Mahdists went onto the offensive and late in 1883, after they had annihilated a hastily recruited Egyptian army sent against them, what had hitherto been a localised revolt became a nationwide revolution. Virtually the whole of the Sudan came under the Mahdi's control. Britain, at this stage, still regarded its presence in Egypt as temporary and had no desire to become too deeply embroiled in the affairs of the Sudan. The reconquest of the Sudan could wait until Egypt was once again in control of its own destiny. The British government therefore resolved to evacuate all Egyptian troops and officials from the Sudan. Gordon was sent to Khartoum to accomplish this, but he was besieged in Khartoum and while the British dallied about sending reinforcements to help him, the situation deteriorated. On 26 January 1885 the Mahdi captured Khartoum and Gordon was killed. The British left the Sudan to the Mahdists, who established their capital at Omdurman on the west bank of the Nile, opposite Khartoum. Gordon's defence of Khartoum made him a hero in the eyes of the British public, who henceforth had an emotional stake in the Sudan.

British withdrawal – Gordon's death

Britain in no hurry to reconquer Sudan

Five months after the death of Gordon the Mahdi himself died and Abdallahi, one of three men to whom the Mahdi had given the title khalifa (successor), emerged as the man in control and began making war on all sides. By the late 1880s the British had decided that their stay in Egypt would continue for some time, and it seemed likely that they would eventually have to reconquer the Sudan. But they were in no hurry to do so. Britain in the later 1880s did not assume colonial responsibilities unless it was forced to do so. Under Abdallahi there was growing friction in the state, and Salisbury began to hope that the state would disintegrate of its own accord and that it would more or less fall into British hands. It seemed a good idea to wait and see what happened. In addition, a large-scale invasion would cost money. Certainly the British parliament would not be keen to pay the costs, and Germany would oppose the necessary funds being drawn from Egyptian finances.

Anglo-Italian treaty

In 1889–1891 the British were more concerned about the Italian advance towards the Nile, and in the Anglo-Italian treaty of March 1891 the Italians agreed to stay away from the Nile valley in return for British recognition of an Italian sphere of influence in the

Ethiopian highlands. Thus the Nile was sealed off in this direction. The securing of the waters of the Nile where they flowed into Lake Victoria was not quite so simple.

Kenya and Uganda

Madagascar The Anglo-French rivalry that was so strong in West Africa was carried over to East Africa but on a much smaller scale because French possessions here were limited to the Comoro Islands, Nossi Bé, Réunion and Madagascar. The hopes of the Merina of Madagascar that Britain would save them from their increasing subjection to the French were ended by the Anglo-French agreement of 1890 when Britain recognised the French protectorate over Madagascar and the French accepted British claims to Zanzibar. But British influence on the island remained strong, and for many years French control was only partial.

Anglo-German agreement Anglo-German rivalry came to the fore in East Africa but it never assumed serious proportions. With British support (part of the price it was paying for German backing on the *caisse de la dette publique*) Germany was able to brush aside the sultan's objections to its East African claims. The Anglo-German agreement of 1886 restricted the sultan's mainland possessions to a 16-km-wide coastal strip. The hinterland was divided into British and German spheres. The agreement left most of what is now Kenya within the British sphere of influence, but the British government did not wish to become formally involved in the area.

Mackinnon However, in 1888 they granted a charter to William Mackinnon, founder of the British India Steam Navigation Company, who had formed the British East African Association together with some former consular officials and philanthropists, and obtained from the sultan of Zanzibar full political, financial and judicial control of a stretch of coast north and south of Mombasa in return for a sum equivalent to what he normally obtained from the region in customs dues.

Company's weakness The British government hoped that Mackinnon would assert British influence in the area that was later to become Uganda, so that the whole of the northern part of Lake Victoria would come into the British sphere. Mackinnon had great plans for linking his field of operations with those of Rhodes and he rather liked the sound of a continuous band of British territory from the Cape to Cairo. But the Imperial British East Africa Company was not so vigorous as either Goldie's or Rhodes's companies. It did not have the financial resources of either. Mackinnon was not of the same calibre as either of the two other men. There was no ready-made product from which a profit could be made as in the case of the palm oil of West Africa. For many years East Africa had suffered from underdevelopment because all activities were geared to the slave and ivory trade.

Stanley; Emin Pasha The German East Africa Company was afraid that the Imperial British East Africa Company would encircle German East Africa, and there was much suspicion and rivalry between the two companies. This rivalry reached a climax when expeditions were sent to rescue Emin Pasha, an eccentric German officer, Dr Edouard Schnitzer, who had become a Muslim and adopted the name Emin Pasha. Since 1877 he had been the Egyptian governor of the Equatoria province in the south of the Sudan, which had

not fallen to the Mahdists. But the predominance of the Mahdists in the rest of the Sudan had cut him off from Egypt, and Britain was concerned about his fate. Stanley was asked to help to rescue him. Approaching from the Congo, Stanley established contact with Emin in April 1888, but the German did not feel that he needed rescuing and it was only a year later that he agreed to accompany Stanley to the east coast, where they arrived with a large following of some 1 500 people in December 1889. On the journey Stanley signed treaties with chiefs on behalf of the Imperial British East Africa Company.

Ugandan rivalry

Stanley's expedition was not the only one sent out, and in July 1889 Carl Peters had set out from the neighbourhood of Witu to find his countryman. When he heard that Stanley had already rescued Emin Pasha, instead of returning, Peters continued his march towards Lake Victoria in an attempt to win the area for Germany. On 3 March 1890 he concluded a treaty of friendship with the Bugandan leader, the kabaka Mwanga. It looked as if Buganda would come into the hands of Germany, but Salisbury did not believe that Bismarck, knowing how important the British considered Uganda and having no particular German interests there, would antagonise Britain by assuming control. Bismarck indeed was not inclined to support Peters. He was still putting down the revolt in the German sphere and was not keen to go into another, even more unsettled area. But at the end of March 1890 Bismarck was suddenly dismissed from office, and with Emperor Wilhelm II likely to step in at any moment and give his own peculiar direction to affairs, Salisbury judged it prudent to come to an agreement with Germany. Leopold was also seeking to extend his borders, and in the period 1886–1887 he was trying to include Uganda and the upper Nile in his new state, ready to persuade Emin Pasha to serve him rather than Egypt and to bring his Equatoria into the Congo Free State.

Boundaries settled

The Anglo-German agreement of 1 July 1890 fixed the boundaries between the German and British spheres of interest in West as well as East Africa. In West Africa the boundary between British Niger interests and Kamerun was adjusted so that Kamerun could extend to Lake Chad – the British were happy to do this to block off French movement eastwards.

The Somali coast; Heligoland

In October 1889 Bismarck made a claim to the Somali coast from Witu northwards to Kismayu. Although the territory itself had no value, Britain had been opposed to the claim because its hinterland could be extended to the upper Nile – Kenya and Uganda could not be secure while this was in German hands. After Bismarck's fall in March 1890 his successors wanted closer cooperation with Britain in Europe and Britain hoped to exclude the Germans from the Somali coast. But the colonialists had the support of Kaiser Wilhelm II and wanted more African territory. By 1890, however, British opinion was turning in favour of extending British possessions in Africa and was not keen to make concessions to the Germans. But Salisbury was able to give the Germans something they did want. Germany received the North Sea island of Heligoland, which appealed particularly to the Kaiser. He had just become admiral of the fleet and saw great advantages in having the island as a naval base to protect Hamburg and Bremen. In return the Germans accepted the British position in Zanzibar and the Nyasa hinter-

land, gave up Bismarck's protectorate on the Somali coast and recognised a 'British sphere' on the upper Nile.

Cape-to-Cairo In the 1890 agreement Salisbury attempted to keep the Cape-to-Cairo road open and made a bid to secure, as a British sphere of influence, the gap between Lake Tanganyika and Lake Victoria and also the gap between Lake Nyasa and Lake Tanganyika. But the Germans were not prepared to concede this. It seemed as if the British were trying to encircle them. Faced with a choice between getting the Germans out of the Somali coast and insisting on keeping the Cape-to-Cairo road open, Salisbury did not hesitate. Cape-to-Cairo could be relinquished. Only the gap between the north end of Lake Nyasa and the southern end of Lake Tanganyika was excluded from the German sphere of influence, and the northern gap came into German hands.

Negotiations on a corridor R. O. Collins suggests that in 1890 Salisbury was not meekly giving up the Cape-to-Cairo idea, but that he gave in so easily to Germany because he had seen another way of securing this ideal.¹¹ Salisbury told Mackinnon that he would have no objection to him reaching some agreement with Leopold to obtain a corridor, and in 1892 Leopold and the company did reach agreement on the hire of a 25-km-wide corridor connecting Lake Edward and Lake Tanganyika behind German territory. But Leopold's price for this was access to the Nile, which the British government was not prepared to pay, and so the agreement fell through. But two years later the British government itself revived the corridor idea and a treaty was concluded with Leopold in May 1894 which gave them a corridor in return for the permanent lease of the Bahr al-Ghazal province of the Sudan. This included access to the upper Nile. The reason for this change was that the French were casting more glances towards the Nile River in the Sudan, and in this way the British hoped to seal the Nile off from France with their own corridor and Leopold's possession of the Bahr al-Ghazal. But the French immediately objected to Leopold taking over this region, and Germany added its protests since it was not happy with the British corridor which would cut off its access to the trade of the Congo. Leopold withdrew his offer of a corridor under pressure.

British attitude Although in the 1890 convention with Germany Salisbury had reserved for Britain what was later to become Uganda and Kenya, he had no intention of taking vigorous steps in the area. He merely did not want Germany to have it. He had hoped that Mackinnon would have been able to secure Uganda for Britain, but so far he had not done so.

Disorder in Uganda In 1890 Frederick Lugard went to Uganda on the company's behalf to try to bring the region under control. He inevitably became involved in the complicated and confused religious-political struggle that was taking place. The missionaries and their converts were divided into a number of camps, the so-called Inglisa party of Protestants, the Fransa party of Catholics, and the Muslim party. With the meagre resources at his disposal he could not bring order to the country.

Withdrawal In July 1891 the company, which was in dire financial straits, decided to withdraw from Uganda, much to the horror of the missionaries. Between money raised by the missions and funds provided by the cabinet under pressure of its new Colonial Office head, Lord Rosebery, the company was able to continue its operations temporarily. Rosebery, who

was very much in favour of keeping Uganda, used this breathing space to organise a public campaign through the press in favour of retaining Uganda. Sir Gerald Porter was sent there in March 1893 and he advised that, since Uganda was the key to the Nile, it should not be allowed to fall into foreign hands.

Ugandan protectorate

By this time people were becoming more aware of the developing French threat to the upper Nile, and this greatly strengthened the movement in favour of retaining Uganda. Rosebery's hand was also strengthened because he was now prime minister. He had the wholehearted support of the British missionary movement which, in its representations to the public, portrayed the issue in simple terms: annexation or a withdrawal that would very likely result in the death of hundreds of African converts, not to mention European clergy. In April 1894 he declared Uganda a protectorate.

British protectorate in Kenya

Much of the western part of Kenya was included in the Uganda protectorate in 1894; the rest of the country became the East African Protectorate in 1895 after the British government revoked the charter of the Imperial British East Africa Company. The British did not want this area, but were forced to take it in order to have access to Uganda and the upper Nile. Work on the construction of a railway line from the coast to Uganda started in 1896. The railway was built not to improve communications with Uganda, but to provide easier access to the Sudan, as the French threat loomed ever larger. By the time the line was finally completed in 1901, the need for it had passed. A casual observer not knowing the history and background to its construction would be mystified by a railway line that ran for thousands of kilometres through sparsely populated bush country to end in an equally unpromising and barren part of Africa. By 1901 Britain had little more than the railway line in Kenya to show for its presence.

The Anglo-French confrontation at Fashoda

Fashoda crisis

The closest that any two major European powers came to going to war during the partitioning of Africa was the Fashoda crisis in the Sudan. The actual crisis was played out against a background of strong international rivalry and competition. There was no central coordination of French policy, and the aim of striking a blow at England in the Sudan came from the permanent officials who had throughout been somewhat combative towards England. They hoped that decisive action in the Sudan would somehow force Britain to reopen the whole Egyptian question. Just how this would happen they did not explain. The French intended approaching the Sudan from two sides. Captain Jean Baptiste Marchand would lead an expedition from the west, while another move would be made from the east. It would seem that French designs on the Sudan had taken form by 1894. Britain was aware of French interest in the Sudan and, as we have seen, in negotiations with Germany in 1890 and Leopold in 1894 it had made attempts to thwart French moves.

Salisbury's policy in Sudan

Salisbury was prepared to play a waiting game in the Sudan, believing that the Mahdi's power would soon disintegrate. In the meantime his dervishes posed no threat to the Nile. When they eventually did reconquer the Sudan, Salisbury envisaged an advance from the south rather than the north, along the railway line that was being constructed

between Mombasa and Uganda. The threat from the French also seemed to be in the south of the Sudan. Thus little thought was given to an advance from the north.

**In-
fluence
of
Adowa**

The Italian defeat at Adowa changed this. The Italians expected that Menelik would follow up his attack, and that the Mahdists in the Sudan would make common cause with them and capture Kassala from the Italians. They therefore appealed to Britain to create a diversion on the Nile to relieve the pressure on them. At first Salisbury was not disposed to rescue the Italians, but then Germany appealed to Britain. Germany was afraid that, if Italy did not receive support, it would regard its membership of the Triple Alliance as useless, and would withdraw from it. The years immediately preceding this were marked by some considerable suspicion of Britain in German circles, and Germany's support for Kruger reflected this. There had been a number of niggling incidents such as the one in 1894 over Leopold's corridor, which really angered the Germans. But the Kaiser's telegram to Kruger after the Jameson Raid failed to have the desired effect because of the vigorous British response and an improvement in Anglo-French relations. By March 1896 Germany wanted to resume more normal relations with Britain.

**Ger-
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for inva-
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Strained relations with Britain had brought about no significant advantages for Germany, and in fact they had led recently to a warming of Anglo-French relations. Now the Italian defeat had rocked the Triple Alliance. Germany was therefore prepared to settle its differences amicably with Britain, but only if Britain would support the Triple Alliance and break off its flirtation with France. In Germany's view, a British advance into the Sudan would destroy the rapprochement with France and demonstrate that support.

As far as Salisbury was concerned, this changed everything. Salisbury did not want Britain to be isolated against an unfriendly Germany, particularly as a real improvement in relations with the French did not seem possible while Egypt divided them. German support for an invasion of the Sudan would make an advance from the north possible: Germany would support it in the *caisse*, so that the invasion would not cost the taxpayer anything. The soldiers would be those of the Egyptian army, led by their sirdar, Herbert Kitchener. What also bothered Salisbury was the report that Menelik and the French were working together – this added another threat to the Nile. In the event, the danger from this quarter did not materialise.

**British
inva-
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Sudan;
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The British invasion started on 12 March 1896; three months later, on 25 June 1896, Marchand set sail from France. Initially Salisbury did not envisage conquering the Sudan, but merely creating a diversion. But pressure from Kitchener, together with the threat that the khedive would not support the expedition if it did not result in the regaining of Egypt's Sudanese colony, by degrees brought Salisbury to accept a fullscale conquest. The money from the *caisse* was insufficient to provide for this, mainly because of determined opposition of the Russian and French representatives on that body to further funds being released for the invasion. Salisbury was not prepared to conduct an invasion on a shoestring budget as another debacle such as that which had led to Gordon's death in 1885 was to be avoided at all costs. He would take no chances.

Kitchener's men were constructing a railroad as they progressed, and this was very expensive. It was also very slow as they could not construct much more than a kilometre of line a day. This slow progress meant that they would not reach Fashoda before the French, but clearly with a railway line to back them up the British claim to effective occupation would be very strong.

Jingoism

When the *caisse* stopped the subsidy, Salisbury did not believe there would be enough money for an advance to Khartoum. But the British parliament surprised him with its jingoism and its enthusiasm for the reconquest of the Sudan and voted £800 000. By this time public opinion was fully caught up on an emotional tide in favour of imperialistic policies.

Although it had initially been hoped that it would not be necessary to use British troops and that the Egyptian troops would suffice, Salisbury agreed to give Kitchener 8 000 British troops to help speed up his advance and conquer the dervishes, who were putting up a surprisingly fierce resistance, despite the fact that they had to keep the bulk of their force near the capital of Omdurman where it could be fed; there was not enough food in the narrow Nile valley to feed the large number of dervishes.

Advance from south abandoned

Salisbury had initially banked on an advance from the south. It was for this reason that a start had been made in 1896 with a railway line from the east coast to Uganda. The construction of the line had not proceeded as quickly as had been hoped. Although a force under the command of Claude Macdonald had been dispatched from this direction, it eventually had to turn back when it was still over 800 km away from Fashoda. By the end of 1897 Salisbury had already realised that Macdonald would not succeed.

Battle of Omdurman

Marchand arrived at Fashoda on 10 July 1898 with 7 Frenchmen and 120 Senegalese. The British advance reached a climax near Omdurman on 2 September 1898 when the Mahdist cavalry was shattered in a classic set battle piece, one of the few in the partitioning era. The dervishes lost 11 000 men and 368 of Kitchener's force were killed.

Confrontation at Fashoda

Shortly afterwards Kitchener and Marchand faced each other at Fashoda. Both men acted courteously and allowed the politicians in Europe to sort out affairs. Marchand said that he could not retire without orders to do so, but he did not object when Kitchener hoisted the Egyptian flag.

Salisbury had the upper hand throughout. As Robinson and Gallagher have written: 'Salisbury's position was both simple and strong. He held all the cards. The British had conquered the Sudan. Kitchener had an army, Marchand had seven Frenchmen marooned by the banks of the Nile; Salisbury had a united government, Delcassé had a tottering ministry; Britain had a navy ready for war, France had a pack of legal arguments. So the British demand was that Marchand should go, without quibbles or face-saving. Delcassé on the other hand, was playing from weakness, as he well knew. "We have nothing but arguments and they have got troops", as he put it.'¹²

France concedes

In the end the French gave in. 'At first sight,' Robinson and Gallagher have reflected, 'there is a certain absurdity about the struggle for Fashoda. The massive advance of Kitchener's army took two and a half years, and it ended by browbeating a few men

marooned by the side of the Nile. There was a strange disproportion between ends and means, as there was in building two railways from points two thousand miles apart to run into the deserts of the Upper Nile. A still deeper absurdity seems to lie in the French speculation about damming the river and in the labours of the British to stop them ... The greatest absurdity of all might seem to be that for two months two great Powers stood at the brink of war for the ownership of the sudd and desert of the Upper Nile.¹³ Public opinion in Britain was very much behind the government, but the government did not act because of that. It might have strengthened the government to know that it had the wholehearted support of the man in the street, but the policy of excluding rivals was based on defence of British interests as seen by the policy-makers.

**National
prestige**

Fashoda, Professor G. N. Sanderson has indicated, was a miscalculation by France. In real terms France would have gained nothing from a British withdrawal from Egypt, since Egyptian security depended largely on naval superiority in the Red Sea area, which Britain had and France did not. But if the French could have forced Britain to retire from Egypt it would have enhanced French prestige enormously, and Britain would have lost prestige. Once France had made it a question of prestige, the British also regarded it as such. Sanderson writes that: 'Ultimately, the quarrel was not about Fashoda, or about the fate of the Sudan, or even about the security of the Nile waters and of Egypt; it was about the relative status of Britain and France as Powers.'¹⁴

**Lack of
central
control
of policy**

The French did not realise how important the British regarded the area. The problem was that there was no central control of French policy; the Marchand expedition was the brainchild of certain permanent officials, a small clique in French public life. As Sanderson puts it: 'The Marchand Mission was not, either in its origin or in the form which it finally took, the policy of Gabriel Hanotaux, the minister who was officially responsible for it during most of its existence. It was strongly supported by the Comité de l'Afrique Française; but it was in essence the policy of military officers and, more important, of high permanent officials who were by the tradition of their service extremely combative toward England and over-ready to assert French prestige by intensifying competition between the two countries ... That the British would react to it in this way was evidently a complete surprise to the French, and especially to the permanent officials who were so often the real policy makers. Whether their surprise ought to have been so complete is another question. But the flat refusal of the British to negotiate, and their evident willingness to back that refusal by force of arms, at once threw French policy into a disarray from which it was quite unable to recover.'¹⁵ Henri Brunschwig puts it another way. He says: 'If one adds up the more or less explicit mental reservations of some, the hesitation of others, the false appreciations of men who were unable to measure the responsibilities undertaken in an operation which was, in relation to the whole of foreign policy, of secondary importance, it is easy to understand how the crisis broke out without its having been intended.'¹⁶ Hanotaux, the foreign minister, was initially opposed to Marchand's plan, but he did not approve or condemn it – he hedged. The French president, Felix Faure, said: 'We have been like fools in Africa, letting ourselves be dragged on by those irresponsible colonials.'¹⁷

Role of economic motive

Victory over the French 'aggression' became, for British opinion, a test of Britain's strength and effectiveness, a test of its imperial greatness. In the 1890s imperial theorists spoke much more about the economic necessity of taking places that could be exploited, so that the economic motive was put forward more strongly even than it had been in the 1880s. But, with the exception of southern Africa, in the 1890s economic considerations seem to have played a relatively small role in the acquisition of colonies. Economic motives had not featured prominently in the diplomatic settlements of the early 1890s with Germany and Italy. In West Africa Chamberlain was not worried so much at the loss of places from which economic benefit might be derived as he was about the French staking claims in areas that he thought ought to be British – in other words, in what he regarded as British hinterlands. In the middle of 1898 he was ready to risk war over places in West Africa that had no economic importance at all. It was not prospects of economic gain that stirred Chamberlain, but the prospect of French advances.

At the start of the partition process, as we have seen, imperialism was a matter for the policy-making elites, for highly placed civil servants and naval and army officers. It was not a creed of the masses. In Germany, as well as in Britain, fervent nationalism and imperialism often went hand in hand, but not in France, where many nationalists felt that colonial adventures distracted from the real task of regaining the lost provinces. Only occasionally did the two merge, as in Brazza's campaign in 1882 to have his treaty ratified.

Aggressive imperialism

But towards the end of the partitioning this changed. Sanderson writes that the dissemination of acquisitive imperialism appears 'to have been a result rather than a cause of the scramble'.¹⁸ As the partitioning neared its end and entered the era of the classic 'steeple-chases' for effective occupation in those West African and Nilotic regions that had not been effectively claimed, there was something like a mass conversion to an aggressive imperialism that was strongly infused with Social Darwinist ideas. By the late 1890s the Liberal Party was almost as imperialistic as the Tories. This new fervour was not confined to politicians but affected a broad spectrum of people, from the universities and learned societies to the armed forces and merchants in chambers of commerce. This fervour was reflected in the way that Stanley was lionised in 1890, Lugard in 1892–1893, Rhodes in 1894–1895 and Kitchener in 1898–1899.¹⁹

French parti colonial

In both Britain and France, by the later 1890s emotions bordered on the hysterical. Omdurman was treated by the British as if it were a major victory, and the French acted as if the national existence of France depended on Fashoda. As far as the French were concerned, what had begun as a 'diplomatic game' had changed, and British refusal to observe the rules of the game at Fashoda threw French foreign policy into disarray.²⁰ The change in the nature of the game was chiefly the result of the melodramatic incidents and chases that occurred in the final years of the scramble, such as the race for the upper Niger and Fashoda. Expansionist-minded French civil servants and army officers had the support of the colonialist movement, known to contemporaries as the *parti colonial*. They emerged as a powerful pressure group only in the early 1890s. They never became an organised party and at no time did their numbers exceed about 10 000,

but they were able to exert pressure by virtue of their membership of one of the numerous societies that had some specific interest in colonies. The members themselves were mainly missionaries, businessmen, politicians, servicemen and academics. At the core of the colonial group in the Chamber of Deputies was the Comité de l'Afrique Française and the head of this inner core was Eugène Etienne, under-colonial secretary from 1887 to 1888 and again from 1889 to 1892. In the French cabinet the colonial party usually had the sympathy, and sometimes the support, of the foreign minister. Delcassé was a great colonialist in the 1890s.

Nationalist support The parti colonial enjoyed success in the 1890s because it was able to count on the support of French nationalists. Before the 1890s most nationalists were still opposed to colonial expansion, arguing that colonial adventures diverted French attention from the main task of maintaining France's position in Europe, that it weakened France by drawing away vital troops and resources from Europe. But in the 1890s, when continental rivalry and overseas expansion became inextricably linked, the nationalists supported expansion. 'For France, unlike her main European rivals,' write Andrew and Kanya-Forstner, 'the nineteenth century was a period of relative decline. Perhaps as a result of that decline, public opinion, especially in Paris where it had most influence on government, was peculiarly sensitive to any slight to French prestige ... The parti colonial could not make public opinion colonialist. But at moments of crisis it could none the less enlist public support for overseas expansion by presenting colonial issues as questions of national prestige.'²¹

Colonial rivalry extension of European rivalry As the partitioning progressed, it increasingly became a contest between the European powers. The African adventures now became an extension of European rivalries in Europe, and the colonial scene became more important to the French public, not because of the colonies, but because of this rivalry and the prestige of France. This tendency may have been more marked in France, but it certainly was not absent in Britain either, and in 1898 the British public was howling for French blood as much as their French cousins on the other side of the channel were howling for British blood.

Social Darwinism Another significant factor was the influence of the fashionable 'scientific' Social Darwinism with its belief in the racial superiority of Europe. Pseudo-scientific racial theories about the superiority of the European race, reflected in Social Darwinism, seem to have been rather a late development and were used to justify previous annexations rather than cited as a reason why Europe partitioned Africa. In terms of this theory Charles Darwin's *The origin of species by means of natural selection or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*, published in 1859, seemed to some people to provide scientific support for the notion that the European race was superior to other races. They saw the conquest of 'backward races' by 'superior' Europeans as part of the process of 'natural selection', with the stronger dominating the weaker. The partition of Africa with its many conquests was thus seen as a natural and inevitable process. Pseudo-scientific racism was at its height in the period between about 1880 and 1920.

While this Social Darwinism can hardly be regarded as a cause of the partition, it did serve to justify the conquests that had already been made, or were about to be made.

There was no better way for a Social Darwinist to demonstrate this superiority than to use armed force to crush 'inferior races'. And at the same time as indigenous rulers and peoples became more aware of the implications of creeping European control over them, and became more determined to resist further encroachment, European bodies, whether settlers, soldiers or governments at home, were not prepared to tolerate opposition. In terms of Social Darwinist ideology, African resistance was a threat to the prestige of the powers, and success against these forces was seen as a crucial test of a power's strength and virility. Thus while colonial control was initially to be secured with a minimum of force and expense, in the late stages of the scramble the racial arrogance of Europe, combined with nationalist rivalry and self-assertion, resulted in African resistance being met with overwhelming force. Although the motives for such force varied, except for southern Africa, the economic motive was not usually dominant. In the upper Nile economic motives hardly counted. 'But one motive was always present, and was always very important: the desire to demonstrate, in the most crushing possible way, the "superiority" of the European.'²²

Nature of Anglophobia

Although the confrontation at Fashoda nearly led to war between Britain and France, Brunschwig believes that Anglophobia on the part of the French or sections of French officialdom should be seen in perspective and that Anglophobia 'was rather a patriotic desire to see France demonstrate its prowess than a fear and hate of Britain. Fear and hate were reserved for Germany.' He points out that: 'Historians, basing themselves on press polemics, may have been led to believe that the Fashoda incident brought France and Britain to the edge of war. But in fact it produced the "Entente Cordiale" of 1904. This agreement was negotiated by the former Anglophobe colonial minister, Delcassé, who had become an Anglophile foreign minister since he could not be anything but a Germanophobe.'²³

Once tempers had cooled and there was a more realistic appraisal of France's vital interests, an Anglo-French agreement was signed in March 1899 in which the Nile basin and its western tributary, the Bahr al-Ghazal, were recognised as a British sphere.

Entente Cordiale

In the next few years Britain and France moved closer to one another, as Britain increasingly saw the dangers of being at variance with both France and Germany at the same time, while France came to appreciate that its alliance with Russia was not an adequate safeguard of its security in Europe. The Entente Cordiale was a comprehensive colonial settlement in which the watershed of the Nile and Congo became the dividing line between French and British interests.

Agreement on Morocco and Egypt

For many years Britain had worked to keep Morocco independent and introduce internal reforms, but this policy had not succeeded. The sultan's government was on the verge of collapse, and in the 1904 agreement Britain gave France a free hand in Morocco in return for recognition of Britain's position in Egypt. To a certain extent the decision on the French side was the result of a realistic appreciation that Egyptian finances had improved to such an extent by this time that French obstruction on the *caisse* was not so effective as it had once been. In the arrangement now made the *caisse*

would remain in force but it would lose a number of its functions, so that it would no longer hamper British freedom of action in Egypt.

Morocco

Outside influence The sultan mulay Hassan succeeded in avoiding the trap of huge foreign loans that had led to the downfall of the indigenous regimes in Egypt and Tunis, but he could not prevent Europeans from increasing their hold on the economic life of Morocco. There was regular contact between the ports of Tangier and Casablanca and Liverpool, Marseilles and Hamburg. If the Moroccan economy had been sound, it may have been possible to limit outside influences, but in the 1870s the flourishing wool and wheat trade of the 1860s declined somewhat as a result of increasing international competition from Australia and North America.

Matters took a turn for the worse when Hassan died in 1894, for his son, who was still a boy, was weak and easily influenced. This, together with the fact that in 1904 Britain recognised French predominance in Morocco, did not augur well for the continued independence of the country.

Moroccan crises Between 1905 and 1911 Morocco was at the centre of an international dispute on three occasions. David Thomson wrote that the Moroccan crises provided a 'vivid illustration of how relatively minor colonial issues could set the powers snarling at one another in the decade before war began. But it also shows how such issues were resolutely resolved and kept subordinate to considerations that most of the powers regarded as their more vital national interests.'²⁴

German interference German interests in Morocco had been increasing steadily, and by 1904 German trade with Morocco was very nearly equal to that of France. The Anglo-French entente made Germany nervous about its general security in Europe, while more specifically it seemed very much like an attempt to squeeze Germany out of Morocco. So the Kaiser decided to do something about it, to see whether he could break up the entente and drive a wedge between Britain and France. At the end of March 1905 he visited Tangier and let it be known that he regarded Morocco as an independent country, and that Germany would take exception to the attempts of any power to assume control over it. When the French foreign minister, Delcassé, who was preparing the way for the French takeover of Morocco, failed to fall in with the German suggestion of a conference on Morocco, the Germans let it be known that while he remained in office Franco-German relations would remain strained. Delcassé resigned, but that was the only victory for the Germans, for the heavy-handed German action humiliated and antagonised Frenchmen and, far from driving a wedge between France and Britain, it strengthened the entente as British sympathy for France increased. Thomson described this Moroccan crisis as 'the beginning of a long series of diplomatic blunders on the part of the Kaiser and, even more, of his chancellor, Prince von Bülow – blunders in the double sense that they had results the very opposite to what Germany intended, and that they greatly increased the accumulating fears and distrusts which precipitated war'.²⁵

**Alge-
ciras
Con-
ference**

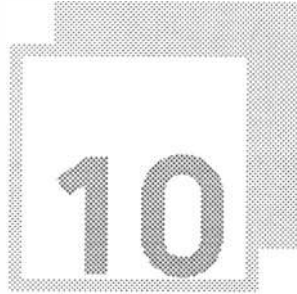
At the Algeciras Conference, held in January 1906 at the insistence of Von Bülow, German attempts to isolate France backfired. The fact that Italy gave her backing to France revealed the weakness of the Triple Alliance while the Anglo-French entente was strengthened. In 1908 there was another international crisis. This resulted in a Franco-German agreement in 1909, which recognised the political preponderance of France in Morocco. In the same agreement, France promised Germany equality as far as economic matters were concerned. In 1911, when the French occupied Fez in response to an appeal from the mulay Hafiz, who was besieged in his capital by rebels, the Germans demanded 'compensation' and sent a gunboat to Agadir, ostensibly to protect German interests. In return for German recognition of the French position in Morocco, Germany wanted France to make concessions to it in the French Congo. With Britain's support, France refused, and for a while feelings ran high and a compromise seemed unlikely. Russia, however, encouraged France to make the concessions. In 1907 Russia had joined Britain and France in the Triple Entente, which replaced the Entente Cordiale, and the last thing it wanted was a war with Germany over Morocco, especially as it had just reached agreement with Germany about the construction of railways in the Near East. After months of negotiation an agreement was signed in November 1911 whereby Germany accepted the right of France to establish a protectorate in Morocco in return for the cession to Germany of two strips of the French Congo, which were then joined to Kamerun to give the colony river outlets.

Thus did the nature of imperialism change as the partitioning entered its final phases, with nationalism and imperialism becoming inextricably entwined. International rivalry and politics gave direction to the chase for colonies as inland borders were drawn.

Notes

- 1 J. D. Hargreaves, *West Africa partitioned*, vol. 1, *The loaded pause, 1885–89*, p. 248.
- 2 W. G. Hynes, *The economics of empire: Britain, Africa and the New Imperialism, 1870–95*, pp. 119–120.
- 3 J. D. Fage, *A history of Africa*, p. 345.
- 4 R. Hallett, *Africa since 1875*, pp. 290–291.
- 5 G. N. Sanderson, 'The European partition of Africa: Origins and dynamics', in *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 6, *From 1870 to 1905*, p. 144.
- 6 A. G. Hopkins, 'The Victorians and Africa: A reconsideration of the occupation of Egypt, 1882', *Journal of African History*, 27, 1986, pp. 388–389.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 Sanderson, 'The European partition', p. 148.
- 9 R. Robinson & J. Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: The official mind of imperialism*, p. 393.
- 10 Hopkins, 'The Victorians and Africa', p. 390.

- 11 R. O. Collins, 'Origins of the Nile struggle: Anglo-German negotiations and the Mackinnon agreement of 1890', in P. Gifford & W. R. Louis (eds), *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial rivalry and colonial rule*, pp. 140–151.
- 12 Robinson & Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, p. 371.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 376.
- 14 G. N. Sanderson, 'The origins and significance of the Anglo-French confrontation at Fashoda, 1898', in P. Gifford & W. R. Louis (eds), *France and Britain in Africa: Imperial rivalry and colonial rule*, p. 289.
- 15 *Ibid.*, pp. 323, 329–330.
- 16 H. Brunswick, 'Anglophobia and French African policy', in Gifford and Louis, *France and Britain in Africa*, p. 33.
- 17 Quoted by Hallett, *Africa since 1875*, p. 99.
- 18 Sanderson, 'The European partition', p. 154.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 155.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 C. M. Andrew & A. S. Kanya-Forstner, *France overseas: The Great War and the climax of French imperial expansion*, pp. 29–30.
- 22 Sanderson, 'The European partition', pp. 156–158.
- 23 Brunswick, 'Anglophobia and French African policy', p. 31.
- 24 D. Thomson, *Europe since Napoleon*, p. 520.
- 25 *Ibid.*



Some perspectives on the conquest of Africa

THE CONQUEST OF AFRICA

African attitudes to the arrival of Europeans

In the late 1870s and early 1880s African rulers had no sense of doom; for the most part they did not feel threatened by the Europeans among them and felt quite capable of meeting any military threat. Many rulers welcomed European help against enemies, to secure some freedom of movement from an over-bearing overlord, or to gain an advantage over rivals. Oppressed groups within a society did the same. Europeans, having access to guns and having the ability to withhold the supply thereof, were welcome allies in one form or another. Because the conquest was more of a process than a single event, rulers realised only much later that their independence was at stake. The development of trading relations between Africa and Europe brought new manufactures to Africa, including strategic articles such as guns. Very soon these societies – or at least their rulers – could not do without these goods. They became locked into the international trading system, and this made it difficult to resist further steps that brought with them European penetration and control.¹

In dealing with the subject of conquest, we should not think in terms of a few major battles. There were thousands of small conquests, and in many of them no blood was

shed. Although the process of conquest spanned a period of some twenty years, the actual conquest of any particular area could usually be measured in terms of weeks or months. Many 'conquests' were entirely bloodless. In colonial historiography the conquests are often known as 'pacification', which is, as Oliver points out, 'certainly a euphemism'. Of course, one should remember that, apart from formal military operations, there was other violence as well, with huts being burnt, gardens destroyed, and livestock confiscated as villages were compelled to pay taxes or pushed into forced labour. This was really police action and much of it took place after the formal establishment of an administration. Although one cannot justify this, one can say that this sort of thing was not new to the Africans – there had been earlier raiders and conquerors seeking tribute, and the methods of these precursors were every bit as violent as those of the new conquerors.² In the battle of Omdurman British forces killed some 11 000 Sudanese. But this was not really typical of the scramble.

African resistance Resistance took many forms – there were clashes between armies, guerrilla warfare, peasant rebellions and 'social banditry'. T. O. Ranger says that it is clear 'that the old attempts to distinguish naturally warlike from naturally peaceful African societies are beside the point. Research has shown that there were no so-called warlike, raiding states and so-called peaceful, trading and cultivating ones, since virtually all states had some crucial interests or values which they were prepared to defend, if necessary by armed resistance. The view that only large-scale African polities resisted while small-scale societies could neither resist nor exploit colonial rule has also been conclusively disproved ... In short, virtually every sort of African society resisted, and there was resistance in virtually every region of European advance.'³

Differences in tactics Resistance was not always obvious. This has led to the use of the word 'collaboration' to describe the attitude of many Africans to the arrival of Europeans in their midst. African historians quite rightly abhor this word with its connotations of sell-out. Africans did not willingly give away their land or sovereignty. What has led some people to think that they were not jealous of their land and sovereignty is that not all societies resisted the conquerors with arms. Professor A. A. Boahen says that virtually all African societies were intent on defending their sovereignty: 'It is in the strategies and the tactics that they adopted to achieve this universal objective that they differed. Most African rulers chose the strategy of confrontation, using either diplomatic or military weapons or both ... Others ... chose the strategy of alliance or co-operation, *not* of collaboration.' He is adamant that 'the fundamental issue at stake between the 1880s and the 1900s as far as African rulers were concerned, was that of sovereignty, and on this, it was quite clear that nobody was prepared to compromise. Those African rulers who have been mistakenly termed collaborators were those who thought that the best way of safeguarding their sovereignty or even regaining the sovereignty that they might have lost to some African power previous to the arrival of the Europeans was *not* to collaborate but rather to *ally* with the European invaders.'⁴

Cooperation: Uganda Such alliances often made very good sense. In northern Nigeria many of the Fulbe emirs were able to retain most of their power by cooperating with the first British officials. Another example of cooperation may be taken from Uganda. By the end of the nine-

teenth century the Christian chiefs of Buganda as a group had won a degree of power *vis-à-vis* the kabaka and other chiefs, which they saw would be lost if they tried to oppose the British annexation of the country – they realised that military resistance would be futile. Although Bunyoro, which had refused to yield to Lugard during the days of the Imperial British East Africa Company, continued to resist the British government for a further four years after 1894, the Ganda chiefs did not oppose British rule. As they saw it, the future lay with allying themselves with the Europeans, and they entered the service of the British as officials in the administration of the Uganda Protectorate. This strategy enabled them to retain much of their authority, and because of this they could make things easy or difficult for the British. This gave them a bargaining position which was recognised by the British in the Uganda Agreement of 1900. In terms of this, in return for their acceptance of British rule, political power was in effect divided between the British and the Christian oligarchy. Thus while the office of kabaka was retained, real power rested not with the kabaka, but was in the hands of the lukiko, which they dominated. The members of this oligarchy also obtained the best land under the most favourable circumstances.

Africans
not
powerless

The above also illustrates a point made by Curtin *et al.* as far as military conquest is concerned: 'The Europeans almost always had the physical ability to win each campaign, but military victory alone was no guarantee that they could then govern indefinitely without imposing a continuing drain on the taxpayers at home. African leaders therefore had a far better bargaining position than their military weakness implied. They could not prevent military defeat, but they could help determine the forms and conditions of colonial rule that followed.'⁵

Expedient
treaties
with
France:
Ahmadu

The experiences of Ahmadu and Samory with the French show how African rulers had to carefully choose their options. In the Tukolor empire under Ahmadu Seku, son of al-Hajj Umar, and the Mandinka empire of Samory, which were the main opponents of French expansion in the western Sudan, both first chose diplomacy, signing treaties with the French. But the French regarded such treaties as only temporary while they strengthened their forces. Ahmadu was under no illusions. He knew that the treaty was regarded by the French as a temporary expedient until such time as they could afford to put a military force in the field against him. But he nevertheless cooperated with the French. His options were limited: his authority over the outlying parts of his empire was shaky, and he wanted to expand his economic ties with the French and thus obtain the arms he needed to bolster his authority. He went so far as to aid the French against Mahmadu Lamine, who was no less a threat to Ahmadu than he was to the French. By helping the French defeat him he was also helping himself. He joined forces with the French in the military campaign that saw Mahmadu Lamine defeated in 1887; Lamine himself was killed. But of course the defeat of Lamine meant that Ahmadu's days were also numbered. This illustrates the difficulties facing African leaders trying to preserve their identity. Although the French used Ahmadu to defeat Mahmadu Lamine and had a peace treaty with the Tukolor, they were at the same time quietly working to undermine Ahmadu, secretly giving guns to his enemies. Despite the peace treaty with Samory they also gave guns to his enemies.

Samory Samory's empire was still expanding, but he was experiencing difficulties and unrest as a result of his rigorous enforcement of Islamisation on the conquered peoples whom he was incorporating into his empire. As the opposition to his Islamisation policy grew, Samory increasingly favoured an alliance with France. He wanted to increase his trade with France and at the same time ensure that the French would not attack him while he was bringing his rebellious subjects to order. So in March 1887 he signed a treaty with France in which he renounced all rights to the land north of the Tinkisso branch of the Niger; at the same time he placed his lands under French protection. But Samory believed that he had become an ally of the French, not a dependant.

Tippu Tip The alternative strategies that African societies frequently developed may be demonstrated too by Tippu Tip's Swahili-Arab empire, which was a threat to Leopold's expansion in the east. Tippu Tip tried to ward off the threat from Leopold by claiming that he owed allegiance to Zanzibar. However, by the late 1880s British and German action had virtually nullified the sultan's influence in the interior and the sultan could provide Tippu with no protection. So Tippu promptly changed his allegiance and accepted an offer from Leopold to become governor of the Free State's eastern provinces. The Free State thus averted a war to bring Tippu under its control, and the ivory of the region no longer went to Zanzibar. Although this arrangement may have suited Tippu, his Swahili-Arab merchant subjects did not like it, as their raiding activities were now very much circumscribed, while rival European traders and members of the Free State's mercenary army made their presence felt in the area. The army, the Force Publique, in particular bothered them. Although officered by Europeans, it comprised locally recruited Africans who were keen to avenge themselves on the Swahili-Arabs who had oppressed them. Tippu himself retired to Zanzibar in 1891, and in 1892 and the Swahili-Arab strongholds were conquered in a war with the Belgians.

WHY WAS EUROPE ABLE TO CONQUER AFRICA SO EASILY?

Role of military technology The question of why Europe was able to conquer Africa so easily has often been debated. African confidence in their ability to handle any threat to their independence from Europe did not make allowance for the gap in military technology. Firearms played a major role in the African scramble for Africa, and the millions of guns that came into Africa from about 1860 were decisive in the changing balance of power among African polities. But their weapons, so effective against other African kingdoms, had great limitations when used against Europeans. Africans could not compete with the military technology of Europe. Even those African societies that were well armed had mainly muskets, whereas the European soldiers and their allies had breech-loading rifles and towards the end of the partitioning could bring the Maxim gun to bear. The muzzle-loaded flint-lock gun had not changed much since it had been introduced to Africa in the middle of the seventeenth century, but the number of guns produced in Europe rose markedly from the later eighteenth century when European smelting furnaces began using coal instead of charcoal.

Weaponry The Napoleonic wars further stimulated production, and at the end of the war there was a considerable surplus of firearms that could be exported. Guns thus found their

way to Africa in increasing numbers. According to one estimate, from about 1860 to the end of the century close to 20 million guns were imported into Africa. A large number of these were muskets. The rifle, which was much more accurate than the musket and had a far greater range, made its appearance early in the nineteenth century. Although some African rulers did obtain large numbers of rifles there were limits to the quantity that Africa could absorb. The best African technology could produce powder and shot locally, while blacksmiths could repair muskets. But the rifle demanded imported ammunition; few blacksmiths could repair it. Africa's iron industries, which were dependent upon intensive labour and a vast consumption of wood for charcoal, could not compete with Europe's coal-fired production. The gap between African and European iron production was to be reflected in the early years of colonial rule when cheap hardware from Europe ousted local blacksmith production. In their occupation of Africa the Europeans thus had at their disposal the breech-loading rifle and the Maxim machine gun as well as an array of field artillery that could demolish the mud defence walls of African towns. The Africans could not hope to compete with this arsenal of weapons. In the final analysis it was not simply the breech-loading rifle that gave the Europeans the advantage; the pace of new inventions defeated the Africans. They were always at least one step behind. Thus in the 1880s magazine rifles such as the Winchester repeater replaced the breech-loaders of the 1870s.

Samory doomed by technical inferiority In explaining the success of Europeans in conquering Africa, the superiority of weapons in particular, and the technical backwardness of Africa in general, feature prominently. If we take the case of Samory, the greatest of the military resisters, one of the reasons for his effective resistance was that he was not a traditional ruler but, as a forger of a new empire, he was able to break the mould of the traditional type of resistance and build up supplies of new weapons in the hands of new supporters. His army of 30 000 men were mainly footsoldiers, but there was also a cavalry elite. He was more easily able to adopt tactics such as mobile guerrilla-type warfare. But in the end his 'empire was doomed through its technical backwardness compared with the European powers that determined to crush him'. This technical backwardness went beyond a simple matter of not being able to obtain enough modern arms. Technical inferiority, writes Bill Freund, 'was embedded in a social context that could not easily be altered from within'.⁶

Sokoto caliphate It was virtually impossible for most African societies to contemplate action beyond the range of their traditional responses. Thus the Sokoto caliphate offered very poor resistance to Lugard. When Kano was captured, the British found huge caches of arms that had never been used. Those emirates that resisted the British did so separately, using traditional fighting methods of mounted cavalry charges against phalanxes of soldiers armed with repeating rifles. Even those states that had had long contact with Europeans, such as Asante and Benin, were technically unprepared when pressure against them mounted.

Technological gap This discussion on military technology once again raises the question of the technological gap between Europe and Africa in general. The gap applied not only to military

technology. The Africans had the advantage of numbers and they knew their terrain, but in many instances the European technology neutralised superiority of numbers.

First stages of partition; small European presence

In the early days of the partitioning there were only small parties of Europeans and the rulers did not feel threatened by them. Even in the Senegal region, Brière and Desbordes had only 500 men at their disposal. Usually the first European presence on the ground consisted of a small number of European officials and soldiers, very often fewer than 20 and seldom more than 100. They sometimes employed mercenary troops, many of them recruited locally. In Nyasaland, for example, when Harry Johnston established a colonial administration, there were 11 other Europeans besides himself, 70 Sikh riflemen from a regiment in the Punjab, and fewer than 100 Makua and Zanzibaris recruited in East Africa.⁷

Bloodshed increases towards end of partition

Oliver and Atmore write that: 'The first stages of the partition, when European states were laying claim to coastal regions and navigable rivers, and were defining on paper the boundaries running inland from these first footholds, were accomplished with surprisingly little bloodshed and conflict. The reason for this was that very small numbers of European forces were used in Africa during this time. The first occupying groups consisted of small, mobile expeditions of European officers or chartered-company officials, accompanied by a few dozen lightly armed porters, scarcely distinguishable from the expeditions of the first explorers. Africa itself was so immense that these first little groups of Europeans seldom came into contact with each other. Their attitude to the African peoples had necessarily to be that of negotiators rather than conquerors. They entered into the local politics of every region they came to, supporting the groups and factions which had some reason to be friendly, and avoiding those which were hostile. In the later stages of the Scramble, however, towards the close of the nineteenth century, when forces were somewhat larger and when the final, interior frontiers were being claimed, meetings between rival European expeditions became more frequent. Collisions occurred between the occupying forces and those of the larger and more organised African states, which often fought desperately for their survival. Numerically, the armies of these states often outnumbered the European expeditions by many hundreds to one, but the superiority of European weapons was overwhelming. A single machine-gun could put to flight a whole army of undisciplined men armed only with ancient guns and spears. As it raced towards its conclusion, therefore, the Scramble produced increasing bloodshed.'⁸

Technology of administration

Towards the end of the partition policy-makers in Europe were prepared to spend more money than they had earlier, and so we see far larger military operations – Kitchener had 20 000 men at Omdurman, Baratieri had 17 000 at Adowa. In the 1890s many expeditions consisted of 2 000 to 3 000 men. This was far more than in the early days.⁹ Europeans had the advantage of the technology of administration which the Africans lacked. By virtue of their general technological superiority the Europeans had the knowledge and technology necessary to feed and maintain large numbers of men in the field for considerable lengths of time – skills and infrastructures which the Africans did not possess. One of the problems of the Mahdi in the Sudan was to keep his large army fed in the field; Menelik faced the same problem, but he was fortunate that the Italians

did not exploit this potential weakness. There was no simple way that African societies could have remedied the deficiency without being totally transformed. The abilities of the Europeans lay rooted in the industrial revolution. Freund writes that: 'In order for African states to have resisted conquest effectively, they would have required to put up not merely a very substantial military effort, but to move towards an economic and social transformation, the creation of a milieu for the reproduction of technology that could have met the depredation of the Europeans on their own terms.'¹⁰ The Chokwe were good gunsmiths but their talents could not keep pace with the rapidly evolving military technology; even Samory and Menelik could not compete with European arms factories.

**Euro-
pean
solidarity**

Besides superior military technology, medical technology (quinine in particular) and the financial and material resources that Europeans could tap as a result of the industrial revolution, one must also allow for the fact that most African societies were small. Not only were most African societies small, they were also divided, and often the largest of the states were the most divided. There was much conflict and rivalry between polities and also within polities – thus we have the Mande against the Tukolor, the Asante versus the Fante, Buganda pit against Bunyoro. After the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878 there was a period of peace in Europe, so that Europe could focus its attention on its activities abroad without having too many distractions at home. Not only was Europe at peace but, writes G. N. Uzoigwe, 'the European powers involved in the partition displayed a remarkable spirit of solidarity which not only eliminated wars amongst them but also prevented the African rulers and communities from effectively playing one European power against the other. Throughout the period under review, various European powers took on the African states one at a time, and on no occasion was an African state assisted by one European power against another. By contrast, the behaviour of the African states was not only marked by lack of solidarity, unity or co-operation but some of them did not hesitate to ally with the invading European forces against their neighbours, only to be vanquished later themselves.'¹¹

**African
disunity**

There is little doubt that European unity and African disunity were vital in accounting for the relative ease with which Europe took over Africa. African rulers had a very limited sense of solidarity. There was no question of them joining up against a common enemy because the Europeans mostly did not fall into the category of a 'common enemy'. Ahmadu and Samory had been rivals for too long for them to join up against the French, which from the point of view of African military strength was a pity. Ahmadu was finally defeated only after the French had made an alliance with his brother, thus exploiting divisions within the polity. The Royal Niger Company extended its authority in West Africa, helped by the fact that African disunity meant that it could deal with the various polities one by one. Fighting between the Moors and the Tuareg weakened both of them, making it easier for the French to conquer them. When Lugard tackled the Sokoto caliphate between 1900 and 1903, he was able to deal with each group separately as the empire was in fact a federation of semi-independent emirates.

**Sec-
ondary
states
divided** The new secondary states were very divided. Rabih, who moved from the Bahr al-Ghazal westwards and conquered Borno, had a divided empire when he came against the French. Although his military dictatorship was an improvement on previous rule, the people regarded him as a foreigner and had no loyalty towards him – for most of his rule he had to face opposition. In the course of their empire-building the larger empires such as the Tukolor or Samory had alienated many of the people they had incorporated, so that there was no sense of loyalty among large sections of the empire. Samory was faced with an internal revolt as a result of his trying to forcefully convert the Mandinka to Islam. Large sections of people within these empires welcomed the Europeans and aligned themselves with them.

**Slave
revolts** It was not only among the newer empires and secondary states that divisions were chronic. Even in older states, where the rulers had achieved a good deal of 'legitimacy', the rulers did not necessarily enjoy the support of the majority of their subjects. 'The ruling groups among some long-established peoples,' writes T. O. Ranger, 'took their own advantage of the opportunities offered by nineteenth-century weapons and commerce to develop an arbitrary power, with the result that they could not count on popular support in a confrontation with the whites.'¹² For example, slaves and serfs in the western Sudan were treated harshly, and they saw in the French advance an opportunity of throwing off the yoke of their masters. Thus the French progress across the western Sudan has been described as 'a creeping slave revolt'.¹³ After the conquest of Benin, when the oba and his advisers were getting ready to organise resistance in the rural parts of the kingdom, the British put an end to this by threatening to emancipate all slaves. Disaffected slaves were not a significant factor only in the European partition; the success of dan Fodio's jihad that led to the formation of the Sokoto caliphate owed much to the fact that the slaves were opposed to their Hausa masters who had oppressed them and were eager to join up with the reformists. When the French conquered Dahomey, this was welcomed by many of the Yoruba who saw it as a release from Dahomian tyranny.¹⁴ European rule was welcomed in Yorubaland because the people were totally exhausted by war and raids and migrations that attended the breakup of the Oyo empire.

**Ethiopi-
an unity** Ethiopia was an exception. It enjoyed a remarkable degree of stability and unity. This was because the nucleus of the state was the small Christian kingdom of Shoa, which had established sources of loyalty that it could draw upon. The fact that it was an ancient Christian state helped to create a favourable image in Europe. That Menelik was able to obtain a supply of modern arms unsurpassed in nineteenth-century Africa was due not only to his skill, but also to the situation of Ethiopia *vis-à-vis* European strategic interests in the Red Sea and upper Nile. It was fortunate too that its independence was challenged by Italy, which, together with Portugal, was the weaker of the European powers involved in Africa, and not by Britain, France or Germany.¹⁵

**Import-
ance of
African
allies** Because the Europeans seldom, if ever, had to face a united opposition, they were always able to find allies who saw in the presence of the Europeans an opportunity of increasing their own power or in some way improving their situation. In most of the major processes of conquest, the African allies played an important role. A large

proportion of troops used by Europe were African levies. Lugard was able to subdue the Fulbe emirates of northern Nigeria with the West African Frontier force that comprised between 2 000 and 3 000 soldiers, most of them recruited from among the Hausa themselves.¹⁶ For Portugal, making use of rivalries between African polities was the only way of securing its claims to the hinterland of Angola. Portugal could not raise armies of occupation, so it exploited local rivalries. Punitive expeditions sent into the interior were armed with Portuguese weapons and officered by Portuguese, very often ex-convicts, but the members of the expedition were locally recruited Africans, obtained very often from among the political rivals of those about to be attacked. The Chaamba of the northern Sahara played a prominent role in helping the French to conquer parts of the Sahara.

Opposition by stateless societies In places such as the Ivory Coast and Nigeria the sternest opposition was provided by the 'stateless societies' where there was no central ruler to be conquered, and it was only in 1910 that the last of the Ibo villages in Nigeria were forced to accept British rule.¹⁷ These stateless societies also provided the biggest problems in administration. 'Because there was no one to make a formal surrender, there was also no one to survive in office; but in this situation, the Europeans also lost their chance for the kind of cheap conquest and cheap administration the British imposed on the Sokoto caliphate. The Ibo, or the Tiv of the Benue valley were far more expensive to conquer, and such conquests took much longer. The Europeans could try to accept the "surrender" of important people, but in fact no one had the power to make more than a personal decision to cooperate with the new rulers.'¹⁸

Later resistance Very often resistance did not accompany the annexation of a territory, partly because the actual annexation was really part of the paper partition and the new subjects did not feel the brunt of colonial rule until later. Much resistance and conquest activity followed after the paper partitioning. Thus in German East Africa labour and tax demands by the private commercial company into whose hands Bismarck had entrusted the colony resulted in the 1888 Swahili-Arab uprising, which was suppressed only at the end of 1889 after the government had sent in reinforcements and taken over direct control itself.

Rebellion in Kenya The British government took over Kenya from the Imperial British East Africa Company in 1895 and soon had to face the Mazrui rebellion of coastal Swahili. It was nine months before this was brought under control. There was initially very little resistance in the interior, but this was because the full impact of colonial rule was felt only in the early 1900s when the Uganda railway was built and Europeans began settling in the central highlands.

Narrow focus of resistance A striking feature of resistance was that it was usually based on narrow sectional interests, selfish interests. African rulers and their subjects did not see themselves as part of a larger entity, and certainly not as nations. They had a very limited view of sovereignty. Historians have been at odds about whether this early resistance can be directly linked with the liberation struggles after the Second World War. Professor A. A. Boahen of the University of Ghana, editor of volume 7 of the *Unesco general history of*

Africa, implies that there is a direct line between this early resistance and later struggles. The chapter on conquest and resistance in West Africa, written by Boahen and M'Baye Gueye, ends with the following paragraph: 'Looking back over this heroic period of African history, the question obviously suggests itself whether resistance was not "heroic madness" or a criminal attitude. These authors do not believe so. It matters little, from their standpoint, that the African armies should have suffered defeat at the hands of better equipped enemies, so long as the cause for which the resisters laid down their lives continues to haunt the minds of their descendants.'¹⁹

Internal tensions Others do not agree. Their main argument is that African rulers in general were fighting for very selfish and often very narrow ends, with which it is difficult to equate nationalism. Niger delta traders such as Nana Olumu can hardly be seen as popular spokesmen for local grievances or as forerunners of nationalism. His aims were narrow and centred on his own activities, and he had to keep a watchful eye on his slaves. Like the rulers of the secondary states, the ability of the traders to resist was limited, because they had generated a whole lot of popular grievances. The large-scale traders in the Lagos interior could not be more effective in resisting the British advance because of the restlessness of the slaves and serfs that made up their labour force.²⁰

Freund writes: 'The most interesting resistance struggles were not really those fought by African states to retain their sovereignty, for this type of resistance tended to be the class struggle of dominant elements who had themselves a strongly predatory character. More historically resonant were those popular risings against the imposition of colonial control which represented a reaction to new and oppressive demands on the masses that began to call up new kinds of leadership.'²¹

Demand for labour And the principal demand on the masses was for their labour. Historians who look at resistance from an 'economic perspective associate mass revolt not with resentment at the European attack on trade, but with the more slowly developing realisation on the part of the African populations that the whites were determined to obtain cheap labour'. Many Africans who at first might have welcomed the Europeans so that they could escape from oppressive rulers or slave-masters or rapacious Swahili traders, would change their opinion when Europeans started looking for labour. By the same token slave masters and traders might at first have been opposed to the Europeans, but later discovered that their interests coincided.²² This resistance to the demand for labour and the alienation of their land falls more into the period after the establishment of a colonial administration and will be dealt with there.

A NECESSARY TIDYING UP?

Conquest as amalgamation Professor Oliver points out that the conquest 'could also be described as the great and necessary process of amalgamation, without which there could have been no independent African states in the world today'. He goes on to say that 'although pre-colonial Africa comprised a few large states – like the Ethiopia of Menelik, the Mahdist state in the Sudan, the Fulani sultanate of Sokoto or the Asante kingdom of the Gold Coast – where subjects numbered millions, and while there were maybe thirty or forty more

which had populations of some hundreds of thousands, the normal population per sovereign unit varied between about five and twenty thousand. The number of independent polities was, at a conservative guess, around ten thousand.'

Parti-
tion as
a tidy-
ing-up
process

Would Africa necessarily have been better off if there had been no European partitioning? He does not believe so: 'The African scramble for Africa would have gone on, and the disintegration of the nineteenth century would have gone much further in the twentieth century. Above all, we must not lose sight of the fact that, even while the European conquest of Africa was going on, in its thousandfold complexity, the links were being forged which would in the future bind one African group to another. Never mind if the roads and railways were being built with forced labour. They were, at last, being built, and the work of welding tribes into nations was beginning. Never mind if Christian missionaries sometimes took advantage of the colonial umbrella: in their schools they were already teaching the young Africans to think of themselves in wider than ethnic terms. The partition of Africa did not happen in the ideal way. It would have been much better for the future of Africa if the European colonisers had taken their shares in fewer and larger slices. But, all the same, 40 future states was a great deal better than 10,000. It was not really the partition of Africa. It was the necessary *tidying-up* of Africa, which simply had to take place if there was to be any genuinely independent Africa in the future. We can regret the modalities, but not the event itself.'²³

Inevita-
bility of
change

Change was inevitable. Those states that were conquered became subject to changes resulting from their new relations with European powers. But as Bill Freund has pointed out, even Ethiopia, which was not conquered, could not simply stand still. Ethiopia could not use 'independence to renounce change and pursue purely "indigenous" historic patterns of development; it had to live within a world which was rapidly moving ahead. This dilemma would have faced other African states had they retained independence.' He goes on to say of partitioning and the colonial rule that followed it: 'Imperialist domination marked more than a phase in the history of Africa. It was the precondition of the emergence of African society as it now exists. Indeed Africa as a meaningful concept owes itself primarily to the predatory instincts of the new conquerors and then, with time, to opposition to them.'²⁴

Notes

- 1 B. Freund, *The making of contemporary Africa: The development of African society since 1800*, p. 104.
- 2 R. Oliver, 'The partition of Africa: The European and the African interpretations', African History Seminar, School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, 16 October 1985, pp. 4, 6-7.
- 3 T. O. Ranger, 'African initiatives and resistance in the face of partition and conquest', in A. A. Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. 7, *Africa under colonial domination 1880-1935*, pp. 46-47. The quote is taken from p. 26 of the abridged edition. The other references in this chapter are to the unabridged edition.

- 4 A. A. Boahen, 'Africa and the colonial challenge', in *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. 7, pp. 10–11.
- 5 P. Curtin, S. Feierman, L. Thompson & J. Vansina, *African history*, p. 458.
- 6 Freund, *The making of contemporary Africa*, p. 104.
- 7 Oliver, 'The partition of Africa', pp. 4–5.
- 8 R. Oliver & A. Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, pp. 114–115.
- 9 G. N. Sanderson, 'The European partition of Africa: Origins and dynamics', in J. D. Fage & R. Oliver (eds), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 6, *From 1870 to 1905*, p. 157.
- 10 Freund, *The making of contemporary Africa*, p. 107.
- 11 G. N. Ozoigwe, 'European partition and conquest of Africa: An overview', in *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. 7, p. 39.
- 12 Ranger, 'African initiatives', p. 50.
- 13 Oliver, 'The partition of Africa', p. 12, quoting John Lonsdale.
- 14 K. Shillington, *History of Africa*, p. 309.
- 15 Curtin *et al.*, *African history*, p. 464.
- 16 Oliver, 'The partition of Africa', p. 12.
- 17 Shillington, *History of Africa*, pp. 311–312.
- 18 Curtin *et al.*, *African history*, p. 465.
- 19 M. Gueye & A. A. Boahen, 'African initiatives and resistance in West Africa, 1880–1914', in *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. 7, pp. 147–148.
- 20 Ranger, 'African initiatives', p. 60.
- 21 Freund, *The making of contemporary Africa*, p. 109.
- 22 Ranger, 'African initiatives', p. 61.
- 23 Oliver, 'The partition of Africa', pp. 4, 13.
- 24 Freund, *The making of contemporary Africa*, p. 109.

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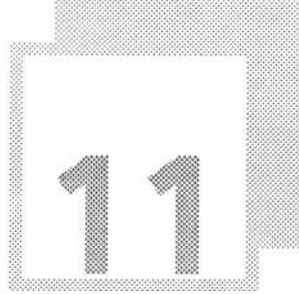
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Part 2

The twentieth century

F J Nöthling



The foundation of colonial rule

Views on co- lonial- ism

Colonialism has a negative connotation: it implies the uncalled for rule of subordinate groups or peoples by foreign powers. After the Second World War anti-imperial opinion branded it as an 'evil'¹ that had to be uprooted at all costs and when the era of decolonisation arrived, African leaders told their followers that any form of self-government, even misgovernment, was preferable to colonial rule. Currently, many blame colonialism as the sole cause of the deplorable conditions prevailing in independent Africa. In contrast to this view, the founders of colonial Africa saw their rule in different terms – as a positive influence that ended slavery, war and tyranny while introducing social and health services and education.

AFRICA'S ECONOMIC PROSPECTS AND DEVELOPMENT

Signific- ance of Africa

Despite the imperialistic propaganda about the 'white man's burden', the 'civilising mission' and the 'holy duty' that accompanied the partition of Africa, the continent was of minor significance in the wider European or global economic context. In Robinson and Gallagher's phrase, the acquisition of the African colonies was merely the 'scraping of the bottom of the barrel'² and the rapidity of the partition was primarily an effort to eliminate rivals and safeguard any future benefits which the continent might hold. Having completed the partition, the greatest concern of Africa's new masters was to prevent the colonies from becoming a financial burden to the mother country. Imperial-

ism, after all, was not popular enough to allow European statesmen to saddle enfranchised taxpayers at home with the burden of carrying the costs involved in economic development or the introduction of administrative systems in the new African acquisitions. This forced any ideas of imperial responsibility into the background. Africa was the concern of those officials saddled with administering the new colonies and those businessmen and missionaries who had some interest in the continent. Besides this, the concept of the welfare state had not yet been developed – European governments expected private enterprise to take the initiative.

**Economic
obscurity**

With the exception of West Africa, where trade with the outside world had been going on for centuries, Africa's economic obscurity was apparent in the limited trade the continent enjoyed with Europe in the first years after the partition. In 1913 Africa was involved in only 7 per cent of all British trade, while the figure for France amounted to 10 per cent; Egypt, Algeria and South Africa were the major participants in this regard. Trade with tropical Africa accounted for less than 2 per cent of British trade and less than 1 per cent of French trade. In 1912 the Belgian Congo's share in Belgian trade was about 1 per cent while the trade between Germany and her African colonies amounted to even less. In the case of the Portuguese, despite strong protectionism, trade with the African colonies fluctuated between 7 and 10 per cent in the years between 1905 and 1926.³

**Factors
mitigating
against
change**

With a few exceptions, Africa did not bring immediate prosperity to the new European mother countries. Except for West Africa, the indigenous economies were not geared to meet European requirements. First of all the blacks had to be persuaded to produce goods for the European markets, and this implied a complete economic revolution of the indigenous economy in some areas.⁴ Several factors inhibited such change. The necessary channels of communication between colony and mother country were absent. Because of the continent's geographical features, suitable production areas in the interior were not linked with the outside world. Africa possesses only a few partially navigable rivers and tropical diseases caused havoc among stock animals. The use of human portage as an alternative was not only undesirable, but was subject to many other limitations. This meant that the construction of railways – a capital-intensive undertaking – had to be faced, while roads and telegraph lines were also necessary for efficient administration. Construction implied exploration and basic surveying which had political and financial implications; African resistance to these activities not only prevented effective action but slowed down the potential economic development of the continent.⁵ Furthermore, Africa's export commodities were limited. Natural rubber, for which there was a demand until about 1912, was one such commodity. From East Africa, where the ivory and slave trade endured for a long time, raw cotton was exported, but this became possible only after the local population had been compelled to change to cotton.⁶

Exports

In West Africa the export of cocoa and coffee was steady, however, as was the export of raw cotton, palm oil and groundnuts. This was the outcome of the changed dispensation introduced by European colonialism. In spite of constant internecine warfare and banditry in pre-colonial times, Africans and Europeans had managed to maintain

long-distance trade across disrupted frontiers. With the arrival of colonialism, a wider and more solid political order appeared, releasing most Africans from the duties of defence and opening up possibilities for more productive enterprises. Limited investment created opportunities for some to plant crops such as coffee and cocoa, without the danger of seeing them cut down by raiders before they could bear fruit. With the experience that more than fifty years of 'legitimate' trade brought to West Africa, the coastal region easily adapted to the new money economy inaugurated by the colonial era. Towns, markets, money and credits existed before the partitioning and its cocoa and groundnut industries were well established before 1905. The changes that set in after partitioning merely amplified trade which already existed in this region and finally reoriented it from the old trans-Saharan routes towards the ocean-based enterprises of the twentieth century. This contrasted with the central parts of Africa where European commerce was more destructive and demanded more direct European involvement, which broke down indigenous economic, political and social institutions.

**Build-
ing of
railways**

Imports were sluggish and included machinery and quality consumer goods destined mainly for South Africa and Algeria, while the demand for cotton goods remained strong. Capital investment was small and long term in outlook, going mostly to agriculture, industry and transport, especially rail ways. Besides the need for capital, the construction of railways depends on political stability, and this was responsible for the change from informal to formal empire: the continent itself could not provide the necessary security. By 1905 railway construction was in full swing and when the First World War broke out, important centres in the interior had been reached. Nearly all of these lines were built from the coast to the interior in an attempt to facilitate the export trade. Internal links did not develop because they were not economically viable – all inland areas produced the same commodities and could not generate enough mutual trade to justify internal linkages. The railway lines determined which resources and regions developed, and the inherent rigidity of railway communication caused the unbalanced growth that came to characterise the continent. The key points of the railway system grew into new urban complexes while regions not served by the rail ways fell into decay or failed to progress. In this way the West African coastal region, which was relatively well developed by 1914 when compared with its hinterland and the Sudanic belt, outstripped the interior economically.

**Avoid-
ance of
finan-
cial bur-
dens**

Compulsory methods were introduced to procure the necessary labour, and various taxes were levied to stimulate the money economy. These steps were taken to try to prevent the colonies from becoming financial burdens to the mother countries. This was one of the reasons why the chartered and concession companies initially enjoyed preference. Most of them failed, but some were still active in Rhodesia, Mozambique and French Equatorial Africa early in the twentieth century. A change became apparent in about 1908 when European governments 'more or less reluctantly committed themselves to governing Africa'.⁷

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS IN THE MOTHER COUNTRIES

- The British Colonial Office** In Britain, the Colonial Office came into existence in the last decade of the eighteenth century, long before the partition of Africa. Its original function was to supervise the colonies of settlement such as the Cape Colony, Natal and Sierra Leone. Gambia, the Gold Coast and Lagos were mere additions to this responsibility. After the completion of the partitioning, the Foreign Office saw no further reason for continued involvement in the many protectorates which Britain had inherited from this process, and transferred responsibility for their control to the Colonial Office.
- Dominions Office and High Com-missions** This changed the character of the Colonial Office, because it became increasingly involved in the administration of the indigenous population while its dealings with independent white settlers decreased. To deal with this part of the empire a special branch of the Colonial Office, the Dominions Office, was formed in 1907 and the Union of South Africa came under its jurisdiction. The British High Commissioner in South Africa continued to hold responsibility for the three High Commission areas of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland. The Rhodesias, ruled by the British South Africa Company, also remained under the High Commissioner's jurisdiction, while the other colonies on the continent fell under the auspices of the Colonial Office. The exception was the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, which remained under the Foreign Office. A minister of colonies, responsible to the British parliament, stood at the head of the Colonial Office, and in the course of time a staff assisted him which comprised experts in the agricultural, economic, educational, anthropological and other fields.
- France** Control of French colonial territories was in the hands of the Minister of the Marine until 1881 when a deputy minister of commerce and colonies was appointed. Mutual differences between businessmen and naval officers initially hampered the functioning of the department until a Conseil Supérieur de la France d'Outremer was formed twelve years later. Senators, deputies from colonies with parliamentary representation, and deputies elected for specific service on the council served on this body. It had limited powers and in 1894 a ministry of colonies was established which governed through decrees. The ministry's authority applied to French West and Equatorial Africa, Somaliland and Madagascar. Tunisia and Morocco were protectorates and fell under the foreign ministry while the Department of the Interior controlled Algeria, formally regarded as a province of France.
- Germany** After Bismarck's sudden acquisition of some colonies for Germany during the early 1880s, the expectation was that the administrative responsibility and the cost of these should be borne by chartered companies rather than the government. This played a decisive role in the move towards colonialism. These German chartered companies were based upon the model which the British had set up in North Borneo, but they failed because German traders politely refused to be saddled with the administration of the new colonies. Trade was their business.⁸ In 1886, all of the German colonies were incorporated into the mother country and German laws were made applicable to them. The emperor stood at the head of the colonies and control was effected through the chancellor and one official in the Foreign Office. They governed through decrees and

the delegation of power. After Bismarck's fall in 1890, a colonial section was formed in the Foreign Office and the chancellor created a colonial council. Four years later Dr Paul Kayser became director of colonies and took control of this section in the Foreign Office. By 1907 German colonialism had developed a poor reputation and a colonial office was introduced to rectify this.

**Italy
and
Belgium**

In 1905 the Italian government took over control of Somaliland from the chartered company under which it had previously been administered, and after the conquest of Libya in 1912, Italy appointed a colonial minister. This was preceded by the reluctant Belgian takeover of the Congo Free State from its sovereign, Leopold II. For Leopold, the Congo Free State was the realisation of a dream, and he became the absolute ruler of this vast region as his private property. With the aid of a prime minister and a treasurer, laws were formulated and decisions taken. Financial problems soon began to plague Leopold and by 1894 the Belgian government was involved. The official transfer followed much later: on 15 November 1908, when the Congo Free State received a new constitution, the *Chartre Coloniale*. Leopold was demoted to the position of constitutional monarch of the Belgian Congo and a minister of colonies and the Belgian parliament made laws and controlled the colony's budget from Brussels. A colonial council advised the minister but this body could not enforce his decisions.

Portugal Similarly, direct control from Lisbon characterised the highly centralised system Portugal used to govern its colonies in Africa. A ministry of colonies was created in 1911 and was the outcome of the republican dispensation which was established in that country in 1910. Decentralisation formed part of the republican policy towards the country's colonies and was related to the view that blacks in the colonies had a claim to official protection. The outbreak of the First World War prevented any direct action in this regard.

In all the metropolitan countries, the newly created colonial ministries enjoyed little power or influence at cabinet level. Decisions influencing developments in the African colonies were often taken on other levels, and colonial governors and officials, as well as politics in the mother country, were often more significant agents of change.

THE POWERS OF COLONIAL GOVERNORS AND OFFICIALS

**The Colonial
Regulation**

Portugal relaxed the ties between mother country and colonies in 1899 with the announcement of the Colonial Regulation. This was an effort to create a coherent administrative system and a governor was appointed in each separate colony while a kind of colonial parliament was introduced. In this way the colonies enjoyed a degree of self-government and entered a decade of progressive development. Lisbon, however, prevented any independent action.

**British
governors**

The British appointed a governor for each separate colony upon the advice of the Minister of Colonies. He was the highest authority in each territory and although governors were responsible to the government in London, strong personalities such as Lord Milner in southern Africa, Frederick Lugard in Nigeria and Lord Cromer in Egypt

often managed to influence the authorities in the capital city. The governors' most important task was to bring the colonies to financial self-sufficiency.

French governors-general In the French federal blocks of West and Equatorial Africa a governor-general stood at the head of affairs while lieutenant-governors ruled in each constituent part of the territories which formed the federations. The governor-general's power grew steadily as he alone could communicate with Paris or interpret decrees from the mother city. In the two protectorates of Tunisia and Morocco, a resident-general stood at the head of the government and in Algeria, which was regarded as an integral part of France, a governor-general, appointed by the French president, administered the region.

Belgian governor-general An administrative-general, later known as a governor-general, represented Leopold II in the Congo Free State. An advisory committee consisting of deputy governors-general and the commander of the Force Publique (Congolese army) and four directors assisted him, but he consulted them only when he deemed it necessary. After the Belgian takeover, the governor-general retained his wide powers to issue decrees and all officials were subordinate to him. A government council made up of nominated officials, some black members, various other whites and some representatives of mining interests was retained. As before, the governor-general needed to consult this council only if he thought it necessary. All actions were subject to the approval of the Belgian parliament.

Colonial service training Colonial governors often attempted to improve the quality and quantity of their rule but schemes to realise these aims were often turned down in Europe by officials who thought only in terms of balanced budgets. It was preferable that public money should be spent on social services at home. In Britain, for example, this domestic spending increased from 18 per cent in 1900 to 33 per cent thirteen years later. Money was a major source of friction between governments in Europe and colonial governors on the spot in Africa. Another source of estrangement was social differences. Officials who made the civil service their chosen career were usually enlisted through examinations. In France and Germany they were part of the bureaucratic elite and they were highly rated because of their financial expertise. They regarded themselves as more capable than the men on the spot who were often haphazardly recruited to save money. Before 1914 there was not much call for these men in Britain and high qualifications were not required. However, as early as 1889 the French offered training at the Ecole Nationale de la France d'Outremer for those who aspired to higher posts in the colonial service. This training centre was open to all French citizens but by 1907 only seventy of the approximately 500 senior officials in Africa had been trained there. In due course the school became a symbol of the unity that existed between France and its colonies.⁹

Other colonial powers followed this example and in 1906 Portugal founded the Escola Colonial. The Belgians created a similar institution in 1911 and nine years later they also established a colonial university in Antwerp. In Britain and Germany many colonial officials came from the ranks of the military, as candidates from this sphere were regarded as capable of working with large numbers of people. The German administration included recruits from the civil service where they had undergone specialised

training. Others in turn were eager for adventure and the French and the Belgians often appointed white colonists into posts similar to those in which the British (in British West Africa) used blacks and the Germans (in German East Africa) employed Indians.

THE INFLUENCE OF METROPOLITAN PARLIAMENTS

- Britain** Despite the fact that the metropolitan parliaments had the final responsibility for the African colonies, colonial affairs did not enjoy much attention in the years before the First World War. Early in the twentieth century the Liberal Party was in power in Britain and although the consent of parliament was necessary to balance colonial budgets, interest in colonial affairs was so scant that the hottest debating point in the British parliament was the scandal in the Congo Free State! The amount of money voted by parliament for the colonies was usually meagre, and the 'leftists' in the Liberal and Labour Parties even resigned themselves to the inevitability of the situation, changing their previous condemnation of imperialism to discussions on how best to rule Britain's colonial possessions.
- France** The French parliament did not have much jurisdiction over, or interest in, colonial affairs. Only Algeria, with its three senators and six deputies in the National Assembly, received some attention. The highest authority was the French cabinet and it was only on that level that legislation could be changed.
- Germany** In Germany the Reichstag had full control over colonial budgets and in other respects colonial affairs were subjected to metropolitan political manoeuvres. Conflicts between people with a definite colonial interest such as soldiers, settlers, businessmen and missionaries were manipulated by Liberal, Catholic and Socialist politicians.
- Belgium** The Belgian parliament was extremely reluctant to take control of Leopold's state in Africa, but the growing virulence of the campaign against the Congo Free State awakened public opinion in Belgium. The gravity of the situation moved the parliament to a reluctant and unenthusiastic takeover¹⁰ despite its involvement in the colony's financial problems in the 1890s. After 1908 Belgium's prime consideration was to evade conditions that could lead to a repetition of the earlier scandal.
- Portugal** Because of the mercantile foundation of the Portuguese empire, a narrowly integrated relationship existed between colonies and mother country prior to the beginning of the republican period in 1910.

THE SEARCH FOR FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

- Concession companies** Financial self-sufficiency was possible only if the basis of each colony's income could be widened, and this meant the extension of trade. In West Africa the British encouraged the export of commodities produced by blacks. In French West Africa too, Governor William Ponty endeavoured to create close cooperation between the commercial sector and the government in the years between 1908 and 1915. He preferred agriculture to remain in the hands of the indigenous population and refused to allow concession companies into the federation. In French Equatorial Africa the government was com-

mitted to limiting official spending, and on the advice of Savorgnan de Brazza, concession companies received large concessions which gave them a monopoly to buy local products. Although this was a cheap method of administering the colony, it opened the way for scandals. The Germans also made use of concession companies and this was especially evident in the Kamerun. Often these companies were in foreign hands, which meant that the economic resources of the colonies were available to them but that the Germans themselves still had to bear the responsibility when the foreigners' activities led to scandals there too.

**White
settle-
ment;
West Af-
rica**

The settlement of whites was another attempt to promote financial self-sufficiency. In British West Africa, white settlers did not play a prominent role despite the fact that until 1914 there were more whites in private employment in the Gold Coast than in government service. The same applied in Nigeria, where whites were active in business and commercial circles. In 1910 the British government took steps to safeguard black land rights against European commercial influence through legislation, and in 1911 the Colonial Office refused to grant the control of labour in the two colonies to the mining companies. This was because they feared that it could hamper cocoa production. They also took steps to prevent the Lever soap company from obtaining monopolistic concessions. In these efforts the Colonial Office was not always successful since strong governors sometimes managed to override London, as Lugard did in 1914 when he acted in favour of the Nigerian tin industry.

**East Af-
rica
and the
Rhode-
sias**

It was not long before other parts of British Africa, such as the highlands of the East African Protectorate (Kenya), were seen as suitable regions for white settlement. The railway line between Mombasa and Kisumu on Lake Victoria, which the British built because they felt it necessary to control the high waters of the Nile, and which cost the British taxpayer R16 million by way of a subsidy, became an important motive for white settlement in the area. As early as 1903, before its completion, the line was showing a financial loss, which sparked the hope that the settlement of whites along the line could turn it into a profitable undertaking. Sir Charles Eliot, the commissioner of the protectorate, encouraged this after 1900, and the British government gave its official support. Consequently, Kenya began to attract small groups of immigrants, especially from South Africa. The same process took place in Northern Rhodesia, while Southern Rhodesia was regarded as an evolving settler colony from about 1890. Small groups of planters settled in Uganda and Nyasaland and had the same aspirations as their fellow settlers elsewhere in British Africa.

**Advant-
ages
and dis-
advant-
ages of
white
settle-
ment**

This kind of settlement had specific advantages. The immigrants possessed the potential to start large-scale production and the colonial government could employ them at lower cost than recruits from the mother country. The possibility that these immigrants could manage the evolution of colonial rule was tempting, but it also held some risks. Special aid was often needed to get white production started and there was the danger that the resulting competition with blacks for land could cause resistance from the indigenous people – and that this might prove expensive to control.

As in East Africa, white settlement in German South West Africa created a similar situation, especially after the great rebellions that took place in the territories early in the twentieth century. The Germans therefore reconsidered their administrative and economic strategy, but this resulted in settler opposition. Bernhard Dernburg was particularly sympathetic towards the reforms introduced by Governor Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg (1906–1911) in German East Africa, but these reforms soon became enmeshed in Reichstag politics – where the settlers had more influential support than Rechenberg. This enabled the settlers to entrench their position in the two German settler colonies.

THE POLITICAL BASE OF THE SETTLERS

Settler representation

The most obvious base of white political power was their representation on government institutions in the colonies and their influence in the metropolitan parliaments. With the exception of the Maghrib and Senegal, whites were never granted any political power in French Africa. The constitutional power of German settlers grew most progressively in German South West Africa. In 1909 whites controlled local government in their own areas and when regional councils with limited budgetary power were introduced in 1913, settler representation was equal to that of the officials. In German East Africa the whites had a majority on the governor's advisory council in 1912, and by the time that war broke out in 1914 they could elect their representatives on the councils of two coastal towns.

Power-sharing

The pragmatic British preferred their traditional policy of power-sharing as it had evolved in the old colonial empire. In tropical Africa the white population was small, however, and it was uncertain how this pattern would develop. Southern Rhodesia had the largest white population, and initial control lay in the hands of the British South Africa Company, but by 1907 elected members had a majority on the legislative council. A few nominated non-official members took their seats in the legislative councils that were introduced in Kenya and Nyasaland in the same year. Kenyan whites saw this as the beginning of their development towards self-government, but the large number of Indians who were settled in the colony soon challenged this assumption.

Legislative councils

Seen in broad perspective, the legislative councils in the British West African colonies of Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Lagos were similar to those elsewhere on the continent. The settlers, however, were black English-speaking minorities, and were literate and Christian. Some were the descendants of emancipated slaves and were 'people [who] prided themselves on being British subjects'.¹¹ The regions where these people lived were formal British colonies and, in contrast to the neighbouring protectorates, this meant that the populations of these colonies were British subjects. By 1906 the governors of all the British colonies in West Africa were advised by legislative councils on which one or more non-official nominated blacks served. The scope of these councils differed, since their hinterlands existed as separate protectorates. Only Sierra Leone's legislative council had jurisdiction over its hinterland, while Lagos's power extended as far as southern Nigeria in the period from 1906 to 1914. In the case of the Gold Coast and Nigeria, the extension of British power into the hinterland actually

reduced the power of their legislative councils. This was part of a tendency to limit the participation of blacks in the central government, since doubt existed about the extension of similar power to the indigenous population of the interior whose lifestyle did not fit in with the Western-educated blacks in the coastal societies. Educated blacks consequently began to disappear from the political scene. The same happened in the colonial administration: anglicised blacks were used during the nineteenth century but they were later replaced by whites. Blacks thus filled subordinate positions, and gradually they also lost these.

THE MOVE TOWARDS INDIRECT RULE

Indigenous institutions

As the European powers extended their influence into Africa's interior, the question that arose was how best to govern these new 'tropical dependencies' which were unfit for white settlement and were seen as backward regions that had to be developed at minimal cost. Besides the economic considerations, the unequal distribution of the indigenous population complicated the administrative process. The result was the increasing use of the traditional elite in systems which have been called 'native administration' and 'conjunctive administrations'.¹² Existing indigenous government institutions began to enjoy preference despite the fact that the basic approach of the mother countries towards the administration of Africa did not support this view.¹³

British indirect rule

Britain was the forerunner in the use of traditional rulers and this gradually became known as indirect rule. This meant that the indigenous power structure was integrated with that of the colonial power. Indigenous customs were retained as far as possible and as long as these did not conflict with Western culture. Indirect rule also reflects the pragmatic attitude the British held towards colonial rule. The British African empire consisted of a wide variety of peoples and cultures and control was possible only if policy was adapted to these specific circumstances. Practical feasibility rather than an ideological base was the primary consideration and this slotted in neatly with the view that blacks were not yet ready to fit into Western administrative systems. Indirect rule could serve as a training ground for blacks to learn to adapt – a view that linked up with the British opinion that it was logical that all colonies eventually attain self-government. In this sense indirect rule could serve a double purpose, since it aided the preservation of the indigenous way of life until the African societies were capable of standing on their own feet in the new order that colonialism had brought to the continent.

Northern Nigeria

Conditions in northern Nigeria were ideal for the development of indirect rule. After the region came under direct British protection in 1898, Frederick Lugard, the commander of the West African Frontier Force, was appointed high commissioner in 1900. Since the welfare of the colony evoked little enthusiasm in the British parliament, Lugard was forced to control this vast territory with a limited budget and insufficient staff. This made direct rule impossible; moreover it would have been unwise for the new rulers to interfere with existing government structures while their control was still shaky. The situation in northern Nigeria differed completely from that in southern Nigeria. The north was poor and had no exit to the sea. It was also Muslim-oriented. During the rule

of the Royal Niger Company the region had experienced indirect rule because the company had used it to keep costs low and profits high. It was thus expected that traditional headmen would act against the slave trade and create circumstances that favoured trade. Lugard's previous experience of indirect rule in Uganda and his loathing of educated or what he called 'trousereds blacks' paved the way for indirect rule in northern Nigeria.

Position of the emirs Northern Nigeria's Fulbe emirs remained in effective control over their Hausa subjects after the British takeover. They had officials who aided them with the administration of justice, maintenance of law and order, and collection of taxes. Lugard retained the emirs and their officials, while respected inhabitants were made headmen of certain districts. In terms of the jurisdiction the emirs had been granted by the colonial ruler, they could appoint or dismiss officials, grant land and handle disputes, maintain law and order and supply essential services. These duties were performed under the supervision of the resident-commissioner and all regulations made by the emirs were subject to the approval of the British government. In this way the traditional administrative and legal systems remained intact within the framework laid down by the colonial government. The governor and lieutenant-governors remained the supreme authorities. They could dismiss the emirs, organise the armed forces, promulgate laws, levy taxes and control the whites.

Local budgets The headmen collected the taxes levied by the colonial government and deposited the money into a native treasury. Part of this tax remained under the control of each emirate and, together with funds obtained from licensing monies, was used for local development. Each emir had to draw up a budget in consultation with the resident-commissioner and the lieutenant-governor had to approve the budget. This placed a great deal of self-determination in the hands of the blacks and was seen as an important element of their administrative training.

Resident-commissioners The resident-commissioner acted in an advisory capacity. His conduct had to be unobtrusive, and Lugard laid down guidelines for this conduct in his annual reports and *Political memoranda*. The resident-commissioners supervised the emirs and had to convey assignments in such a way that they did not detract from the dignity of the traditional leaders. The emirs were compelled to follow the advice of the resident-commissioners and had to issue government commands in their personal capacities. The emirs were therefore accountable for the consequences of these instructions. It was the task of the resident-commissioners to see that the political and social systems of the groups under their control remained intact. They had to acquaint themselves as best they could with the indigenous customs, ceremonies and traditions in the areas where they were stationed. In this way British rule became interwoven with existing structures and the mother country was able to rule unobtrusively with a minimal number of officials.

Lugard's administration One of Lugard's greatest achievements was the simplification of the emirs' tax system. In consultation with the emirs, he developed a new system which increased the annual income of northern Nigeria to R400 000. This was still insufficient but lack of funds did

not deter Lugard from developing the territory. In 1901 he took steps against slavery and dismantled its legal status; all slave children born after 1 April 1901 were to be freed. Road building and railway construction improved communication while better use of the navigable part of the Niger River and improvements to the Lagos harbour in 1907 were intended to do the same. By 1910 it was obvious that none of these projects could make northern Nigeria self-sufficient and the British began to think in terms of the amalgamation of the protectorates of northern and southern Nigeria to lighten the financial burden on the mother country. This idea was supported by the educated elite along the coast and by the officials in Lagos. It signified the consolidation of metropolitan power and also met the requirement of more effective occupation as projected during the Berlin Conference in 1884. Lugard, who left northern Nigeria in 1907, was recalled to implement the idea and he recognised the opportunity of expanding indirect rule to the south. When amalgamation was achieved on 1 January 1914, indirect rule found its way to the south.

Weakness of indirect rule

The weaknesses of indirect rule then began to appear. There were no emirs in southern Nigeria, and Lugard was mistaken in his view that the Yoruba family states had similar governmental structures, as was true in northern Nigeria. The Yoruba oba lacked the autocratic power of the emir because in these communities authority was shared among a number of chiefs, each of whom held far less power than the British realised. A similar situation existed among the Ibo. They had few chiefs whom the British could use because ward meetings formed the base of Ibo political power and even the elders found it difficult to control these meetings.¹⁴

GERMAN TENDENCIES TOWARDS INDIRECT RULE

Administrative problems

Like the British, the Germans also experienced a shortage of men and money to govern the regions under their control. In 1901 only 77 white officials ran the Kamerun, while 23 sufficed for Togo.¹⁵ These areas were characterised by the same wide variety of cultures and political systems, but in contrast with the British, the Germans lacked the experience the British had gained of ruling foreign people. When Bismarck proclaimed the German protectorates he thought in terms of government by the merchant companies, based upon the model of the chartered companies the British used in India,¹⁶ but the companies on whose behalf Bismarck acquired these colonies politely refused to get involved in colonial administration.¹⁷ His expectations came to nothing and by 1886 the German government were in sole control of the protectorates. Gradually, as indigenous resistance to the German presence was overcome, civil government was introduced.

Local government

In this process the Germans gave full recognition to ethnicity.¹⁸ Like the British, they came into contact with the Fulbe system in Kamerun. In German East Africa, with its greater ethnic variety, the Arabic akida system offered a base upon which the Germans could build. From 1904 they felt that they were following well-founded British and Dutch principles and a form of local government arose that was very reminiscent of indirect rule. Local headmen performed certain administrative tasks and collected taxes, made roads, supplied draft labour and assisted in the administration of justice.

In German Africa these headmen were under much stricter control than in British Africa.

**German
West Africa**

The application of the system differed from region to region. In Togo, recognised headmen retained their positions, but where there were no headmen, the Germans recruited some from the ranks of the village chiefs or loyal employers – a step that opened the way for 'local big men' to grab power and to undermine other strong leaders who had previously held sway.¹⁹ In Kamerun, too, the Germans tried to retain the traditional authority – even where their conquest had destroyed it. They were most successful in Adamawa where the headmen received the right to keep a portion of the taxes they collected. Governor Theodore Seitz wanted to create a representative council which could decide on the application of the local finances but Berlin refused to approve this measure.²⁰

**German
East Africa**

In German East Africa the Germans relied heavily on the indigenous power structures that existed in the region. There were many strong traditional headmen and where there was a shortage, the existing Swahili bureaucracy from the days of the Zanzibar sultanate were used. The town governors or liwales and the subjected akidas in the country retained their authority. By 1913 many akidas had already received training in government schools but because they were Muslims they were not attuned to local traditions.²¹

Ruanda Between 1907 and 1913 the system reached an advanced stage of development in Ruanda. Indigenous headmen maintained law and order without becoming bureaucrats or agents for a foreign ruler and between 1906 and 1916 the district officer of the Mwanza district went further: he regarded the traditional rulers as the sole representatives of their subjects. He used them to implement development projects and was strongly in favour of the formation of native treasuries. During the governorship of Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg, attempts were made to involve the headmen in the administration of justice; indigenous courts were given greater independent jurisdiction. German East Africa, however, lacked a person like Lugard who could oversee the codification of indigenous law in the colony.

**More
formal
indirect
rule**

When Wilhelm Solf, an Anglophile who believed in the idea of a national culture and admired British colonial policy, took control of the German Colonial Office in 1911, Germany moved closer to a more formal use of indirect rule. Solf was worried about the disruption that certain groups in Togo and Kamerun had suffered during the partition, and in 1913 he paid the German West African colonies a visit to determine how future colonial policy should evolve. His journey included a visit to Northern Nigeria where he admitted his admiration of the British system to Lugard. Solf regarded the protection of indigenous law and tradition as the most suitable policy – despite the criticism of some minor white officials, missionaries, European capitalists and educated blacks.²² He believed that the Fulbe and Hausa speakers would benefit from indirect rule but remained uncertain about the financial implications, such as the use of native treasuries. Solf's first step was to increase the authority of the residents and political officials in the north of Kamerun. His plans were interrupted, however, when the First

World War broke out and the German West African colonies fell into British and French hands.

THE UNCERTAINTIES OF ASSOCIATION

Principle of assimilation

The French belief in the superiority of their culture and their willingness to welcome strangers within their ranks formed the basis of the assimilation policy, which they accepted as a principle as far back as the seventeenth century.²³ In the eighteenth century this principle found philosophical expression in the belief in the inherent equality of man, the teachings of Rousseau and Voltaire, the declaration of the rights of man, and the abolition of slavery.

The Algerian testbed

Although efforts to assimilate the Indians of Canada, or, for that matter, the inhabitants of the French colonies in the West Indies and in the Indian Ocean, were not very successful, they did not discourage the belief in assimilation. In the nineteenth century Algeria became the testing ground for this principle. The presence of whites in this Muslim region complicated matters and made the process of assimilation a two-sided affair: administrative assimilation, preferred by the colonists, who were known as colons, and second, the original idea of absorbing non-French elements into French culture. The Algerian experience was complicated by the military significance of the French presence in the country – the result of Muslim resistance to French presence in Algeria. During his reign Napoleon III realised that Algeria was an Arab country and a shift towards what became known as association set in while the requirements for assimilation were met. After his fall, however, the Third Republic intensified its efforts to assimilate the indigenous population. Although these steps failed, they caused a significant shift in favour of association in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Senegal In war-ridden Algeria the military initiated the move towards a 'politique d'association'. General Thomas-Robert Bugeaud worked for a change of policy with particular emphasis on obstructing the influence of the colons, and subsequently one of his disciples, Louis Faidherbe, carried this idea to Senegal, which became the model for French local administration in the black African federal blocks. Faidherbe's expansion of French influence brought France into contact with a wide variety of different sub-Saharan cultures. In 1857 Faidherbe replaced the initial military rule with a new administrative system based on the Algerian example which aimed to effect the domination and control of the area at the lowest possible cost. It comprised a regional administration with permanent officials controlling districts called *arrondissements*. These officials were given the responsibility of supervision of local chiefs. They had to keep the peace and promote circumstances that favoured trade, although specific functions for these district officials were not defined until 1863.²⁴ Indigenous chiefs had a specific role in the system since they controlled the *cercles* into which the districts were divided. They held considerable power and had independent control over justice, police, trade and agriculture. They also had to convey orders to the local village chiefs who owed them allegiance.

- Diminished power of chiefs** With this system, the erosion of the power of the chiefs began. Faïdherbe replaced those who failed to serve his purpose, and in 1863 the powers they initially held were taken away when Jean Jauréguibery defined the powers of the district commissioners. These officials were granted control of administrative, judicial and police matters while the authority of the chief was limited to smaller cantons where he supervised the village chiefs. Because of inefficiency on the part of the men responsible for putting Faïdherbe's policy into effect, the scheme failed and renewed efforts were made to select more suitable people for these posts. The calibre of officials improved after 1887, but in 1894 some were still regarded as common and coarse.²⁵
- Hierarchy of men** The last years of the nineteenth century saw a change in the views on the equality of man which underpinned the principle of assimilation. The colonial experience had underlined the different social and economic structures to be found there. Belief in the basic equality and unity of mankind was now considered naive: Europeans visualised a hierarchy within the ranks of mankind with themselves at the top. This placed doubt on the ability of the colonials to assimilate French culture. It was regarded either as impossible or likely to be a very slow process. The experience of French army officers in Indo-China was another contributory factor in the development of a preference for association rather than assimilation.
- Association** Joseph Gallieni was an army officer who was strongly in favour of new administrative techniques. He gained experience in Senegal and Indo-China, especially in his contact with the civilisation of Tonkin, where he preferred to use the elite drawn from the ranks of the conquered peoples to serve as a subordinate governing class. This enabled the French to utilise their limited colonial personnel to the full. Useful local customs could be retained and undesirable ones could be discontinued, paving the way for 'proper' development.²⁶ This was a policy of association, although it did not imply that all chiefs automatically retained their positions: the French often replaced those who were incompetent with others who were deemed more suitable for their needs. In 1896 Gallieni introduced this policy to Madagascar in an effort to stabilise the country. He occupied only a small part of the disputed area, using members of the indigenous population as middlemen between the new government and the masses. The region was then developed peacefully to lure surrounding rebellious groups into submission. By 1905, when the island was peaceful again, the administration was expanded with Malgassians in subordinate positions. Usually these officials were from the Merina because they had an advanced Western education.
- Influence of the Ecole Coloniale** In the early 1900s the Ecole Coloniale, which favoured assimilation, and where future colonial administrators were trained, began to lean towards association. This was a result of the influence of people such as Gallieni and other colonial officials, whose overseas experience underscored the differences between France and its empire in terms of social, economic and political institutions. Association advocated respect for the traditions of the colonial societies, especially the chieftainship, but also pointed out that the unique character of these societies called for special institutions that differed from those found in France.²⁷ Association refuted the idea of making Frenchmen from the colonial people. Instead, it was suggested that France should aid these people in

developing according to their own potential, implying that France should associate itself with and respect the colonial societies. As such, it was not dissimilar to the British idea of indirect rule or government through indigenous structures. Although most French administrators were convinced of the value of association, few were willing to take the step towards indirect rule. Association basically meant paternal, authoritative rule. As Louis-Hubert Lyautey, a famous French exponent of association, once declared: 'We have direct administration in our blood.'²⁸

Morocco Lyautey was one of Gallieni's disciples and served under him in Tonkin and Madagascar before he became resident-general of Morocco in 1912. During his reign, which lasted until 1925, Lyautey made the French occupation less overpowering. He refused to make Frenchmen out of the Moroccans and, in accordance with the principles of association, tried to promote the development of the sultan's authority under French control. Lyautey revised and reformed Morocco's administration and, where he deemed it necessary, new administrative techniques were introduced. All these steps were taken in the name of the sultan, in the hope that an administrative elite would develop that might, in the future, associate Morocco with France through its own inner conviction. The colonies and foreign entrepreneurs were kept under strict control and the regions they could exploit were limited.²⁹ Lyautey's task was easier because Morocco was a protectorate, but in reality the country had lost its independence and been subjected to France.

Association and indirect rule Association thus reformed 'native rule' into a policy very similar to indirect rule, but there were some important differences. The French preference for centralisation remained, since decentralisation reminded the French of feudal and regressive government. These were negative influences, detrimental to the people, while centralisation was a progressive force. To the French, purposeful administration was absolute and pervasive³⁰ and anything that eroded this principle amounted to the abdication of power. This was a result of French history, the tradition of the Ancien Régime, Napoleon I and the revolution. Another difference between association and indirect rule lies in the dissimilar social backgrounds of French and British officials. Because they came from the middle and lower middle classes, French officials abhorred all feudal and monarchical institutions – ideologically they were hostile towards African chiefs. In contrast, their British counterparts regarded the African traditional elite with greater sympathy. To the French they were retarded, feudal, untrustworthy with a tendency towards exploiting their subjects. It was their task to liberate the masses from these evil influences. French pride in their culture made them unable to show true respect to African chiefs, and even the few officials that did not regard African institutions as undesirable were unwilling to pay any public respect to African chiefs.

For all practical purposes the French maintained the *chefs de canton* but stipulated the geographical limits of the canton, the power a chief could hold and the person who could occupy the position. Village chiefs were left undisturbed if they were not guilty of some form of misconduct. In acephalous societies such as those in the Congo, individuals who had previously held only religious power were given political authority too. Even in these instances the French did not see any value in the institutions

they used. In several regions French rule actually destroyed chieftainships since the chiefs had responsibilities to collect taxes and provide labour. In carrying out these duties they were often scorned and rejected in their communities and were called government puppets. When they were no longer useful to the colonial rulers their jurisdiction was restricted even further. The hostility of local commanders prevented the application of association to its fullest extent. Local commandants preferred their own autocratic rule to the element of indirect rule that the principle of association implied.

DIRECT CONTROL – PORTUGUESE AND BELGIAN STYLE

Formal administration

During the last decade of the nineteenth century the Portuguese began formal administration of their colonial possessions despite pressure to reduce their deficits in Africa and despite the fact that they controlled only about 10 per cent of these areas. This move was to some extent the outcome of the demand for effective occupation formulated at the Berlin Conference, but the expectations of concessionaire companies for economic opportunities also played a role. In the implementation of this process, the Portuguese encountered problems similar to those experienced by the other colonial powers: cultural diversity, urbanisation and the influence of the *mestizos*, or people of mixed blood. Despite this, the Portuguese believed in strict assimilation and direct control and made no provision for individual African interests or any form of indirect rule.

Portugal: maintenance of traditional society

The Portuguese regarded themselves as the permanent guardians of the indigenous population or *indígenas*, who comprised 98 per cent of the total colonial population. They were seen as potential taxpayers, labourers, producers in the traditional economy and possible *civilizados*, or people who could be integrated into Portuguese society. In theory, however, the Portuguese aimed at the maintenance of traditional society and in the first districts or *circoscrições*, introduced in Mozambique in 1907 and in Angola in 1911, the tribal system and traditions were left intact.³¹ Regions principally inhabited by Africans were subdivided into *postos*, governed by a *chefe de posto*, and these were subdivided again into *regedores* controlled by a *regulo*. Usually these were village headmen or *civilizados*. The *chefe de posto* ruled the black inhabitants directly and traditional law was recognised, but no separate courts were allowed. In cases involving blacks only, judgement was given by the *chefe de posto* who, in cooperation with the local chief, had to take native custom into account. Although the right to communal land was recognised, blacks had to pay a native tax and perform labour to which the Portuguese attached a significant civilising influence. In this, the Portuguese colonies did not differ significantly from the other colonies in Africa.

Portuguese administrative system

Before the 1890s, when Portugal's hold on the interior was very weak, it was forced to recognise the independence of many of the indigenous chiefs. With the introduction of an administrative system this situation changed. The Portuguese had no specific use for the chiefs and gave preference to village headmen whose duties included tax collection and the organisation of the labour supply – responsibilities for which they received no privileges in return. The *regulo* was no more than a government agent in the village and very few of these men came from the ranks of the traditional ruling class – those who

did often preferred to act as arbitrators between the regulos and the people. The chefe de posto exercised direct control and his duties included the keeping of law and order, the building and maintenance of roads, control over the liquor trade, the promotion of agriculture, tax collection, and labour supply. His responsibilities also included the development of a Portuguese way of life, promotion of the use of the Portuguese language and fostering, among the indigenas, loyalty towards the Portuguese motherland. There were few chefes de posto and their salaries were meagre. This contributed to their pursuit of private trade and their misuse of the small police force against the native population – steps that did not promote the civilising influence that was expected from them.

**Leopold's
administration**

In contrast with the Portuguese, with their long but limited experience of ruling Africa, the Belgians had no previous experience, nor had they had commercial contact with the continent. Leopold II advocated minimal interference in tribal affairs. As his officials penetrated deeper into the interior, they divided the colony into districts that became known as provinces and in 1906 there were fourteen such provinces which were subdivided into zones, secteurs and postes. Since the region was in turmoil before the establishment of the Congo Free State, and because Leopold had too few officials to serve in the region,³² control was largely ineffective and abuses were rife as missionaries, Arab slave dealers and an assortment of adventurers continued to exploit the situation.

**Attempts
at reform**

In 1891 Leopold attempted to effect positive change by giving the indigenous authorities a share in the determination of their own affairs. Chiefs became responsible for specific tasks³³ but this did not have the desired effect. Often the chiefs were appointed arbitrarily, and because they did not come from the traditional ruling class, they were regarded as lackeys of the government. Administration left much to be desired as badly paid agents could supplement their meagre incomes by obtaining bonuses for delivering larger rubber quotas. The judiciary was in their hands and malpractices were rife, creating widespread international reaction to conditions in the Free State.

**Chefferie
system**

This convinced Leopold that he needed to reform this policy, which undermined the position of the chiefs for pure economic gain. In 1906 the colony was divided into chieftainships called chefferies in an effort to restore the system his agents had destroyed. The system began to resemble indirect rule, because the legal duties and rights of chiefs were specified and – even more significant – they became salaried links between the government and the indigenous authority. As part of their responsibility they had to give the assurance that the will of the colonial power was being carried out at the lowest level and a chief's only right was to control the movement of people living in his chefferie. An attempt was made to respect native customs so long as these were not contrary to public order and healthy development, but in practice this effort failed because ignorance about local customs fragmented tribal institutions even further and the shortage of good administrators militated against any form of sound administration.

Position of chiefs After 1910 the Belgian government tried to take this development a step further and divided the Congo into chefferies and sous-chefferies, each with a salaried chief, who enjoyed official recognition, at the head of its administration. He was given explicit administrative and police powers including responsibility for conveying administrative ordinances to his subjects, keeping the peace, assisting in census returns and tax collection, and also recruiting members of the Force Publique. He had to inform the government of all crime, drug and slave trading and the outbreak of infectious diseases. His criminal jurisdiction was limited to small matters under official control.³⁴

The chief remained a government agent and his acceptability to both the government and his subjects was of vital importance for the success of the system. There were no clear rules about the division of the Congo into chefferies and sous-chefferies. The result was chaotic. In 1911 there were 2 200 chiefs and their number grew to 4 000 in 1918. Many of them were colonial auxiliaries without local roots, which made the system one of direct rather than indirect rule³⁵ because the Belgians adapted the indirect principle to serve their own purposes.³⁶ After its introduction, some years elapsed before the Belgians gave any indication of how this system should develop. The first move in this direction was made in 1917 when it was suggested that the chieftainship would eventually disappear as chiefs became civil servants.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic coercion African resistance to European rule not only slowed down the economic development of Africa's marginal share in the global economy,³⁷ but evoked various forms of economic coercion of which the most blatant was the direct appropriation of cattle – a method some of Africa's indigenous warrior economies such as the Ndebele, Ngoni and Masai also practised regularly. In similar fashion, the Rhodesian pioneers confiscated Lobengula's cattle after the defeat of his kingdom in 1893. Other forms of pressure included the appropriation of land, forced or partly coercive labour recruitment, the gathering of crops, and various taxes. These methods were attacked in humanitarian and missionary circles as well as in metropolitan parliaments. This pressure and the economic developments taking place in the colonies initiated reform in the first decade of the twentieth century. Metropolitan governments tightened control over companies active in the African colonies and regulated the action of officials responsible for these regions. After the rebellion of 1896–1897 in Rhodesia, the Belgian takeover in the Congo in 1908, and also under Bernhard Dernburg's control of the German colonies between 1906 and 1910, reform was introduced which relieved the harsh methods of the first years of colonial rule.³⁸

Investment in colonies This did not replace the demand for financial self-sufficiency, and private investors, bankers, traders, planters and business undertakings were encouraged to become involved in the colonies while taxes were drawn up to attract such investment. Import duties and hut or poll taxes were introduced to provide funds for the running of the colonies, and the British government thought in terms of occasional grants and loans to help the fledgling colonies towards this financial goal. The French and German governments (and, after 1908, the Belgians too) pumped more money into their colonies than

the British. Economic policy was designed to serve European enterprises or African farming. In West and Equatorial Africa, where white settlement was not encouraged, the local infrastructure developed around the needs of African peasant farmers and European commercial groups. In regions such as Kenya, Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo, where white settlement did take place, the government concerned itself with the needs of white farmers, plantation owners or mining. Funding came from African tax revenue, forced labour and occasional subsidies from the mother country.

Colonial economies

The colonial economies were controlled from the European capitals and included all trade as well as currency and banking. The colonial administration made the laws concerning land and labour, and economic planning and commerce was the first sector that was regulated. Britain and Germany continued their policy of free trade in Africa and tried to persuade the other colonial powers to do the same. British Africa remained a free trade area for most of the colonial period and it was only after 1932 that some restrictions and preferential duties were introduced. The economy was not run for the exclusive benefit of the mother country and no monopolies were ever enforced. Investors from Britain played a significant role in the former German colonies where conditions for foreign enterprise were always favourable. In contrast, France followed a protectionist policy and in terms of its preference for close assimilation between itself and its colonies, France wanted a close economic integration with colonies serving the interest of the mother country. Only when international treaties forced France to follow free trade principles did it follow the open door policy. The Méline Tariff of 1892 brought all colonies under control of metropolitan tariffs and the hold of the metropolitan tariff system on the colonies was partially relieved in 1928. France dominated the trade of its colonies more than any other colonial power (with the exception of Portugal, whose colonies were of especial importance to it, and became even more so after the Second World War) – a situation that continued after independence was granted in the 1960s. No monopoly of colonial commerce existed, and although France, Belgium and Portugal traded more with their colonies than any rivals, foreign merchants did enjoy a considerable proportion of this trade.

Land matters

African dependence on land for their livelihood continued during the colonial era and in most cases indigenous forms of land tenure remained intact in one form or another. Traditional systems were often preserved by colonial paternalism. This restricted the opportunities for Africans to sell land and also ran counter to the interests of white settlers, planters and concessionaires. This pressure on land was limited to areas of temperate climate and it varied in relation to the total population and the availability of water and fertile soil. When the European conquest began, ample land was available. Rhodesia was a vast area, thinly populated by about a million people who lived in specific localised regions. After the conquest, the inflow of settlers and the growth of the African population changed this, and land became more intensively utilised. Africans lost the right to use vast sections of land, especially that in the proximity of the railway lines. New techniques of agricultural and stock farming introduced by the whites resulted in an increased use of land by the Africans who adopted these new

techniques. African cattle ownership increased from 55 000 in 1902 to 377 000 in 1913 and they cultivated 295 000 ha of land in 1908 compared with 223 000 ha in 1902.³⁹

**Con-
ces-
sions**

In the regions where white settlement had not occurred, land remained in the hands of the Africans. White land ownership in British West Africa and German Togo was restricted to real or supposed indigenous interest and whites could lease land only for mining or timber use. Few concessions were granted in French West Africa since the French were wary to do so because of problems they had encountered in Algeria and earlier efforts to force Africans off their land in Senegal. A different policy was followed in French Equatorial Africa, where the French tried to open up the area. Forty companies received 70 per cent of the land in large concessions but because of abuses this practice was limited in 1906. Three types of concession were used in the Congo Free State after the takeover by the Belgian government in 1908. Leopold II had granted some land to railway companies and the land which commercial companies received in Katanga included administrative and commercial control. Other concession companies received the right to market forest products while some individuals and European commercial enterprises received land for commercial purposes. All in all, 21 million ha of land were eventually granted to these European establishments and shortly before the Congo became independent, the Africans retained 49 million ha. After the Portuguese took control of their share of Africa, they tried to develop their colonies by granting land to settlers and concessionaires. Late in the nineteenth century associations such as the Nyasa Company and the Mozambique Company were given large estates on which they ruled like governments. In contrast, efforts to establish peasant farming schemes were largely unsuccessful.

**Forced
labour**

The absence of mechanisms which could change labour into a commercial commodity linked to European capital soon caused labour problems for the Europeans. When they tried to intensify the production of commodities such as rubber, the lack of transport facilities and the difficulty in supplying economic incentives led to a chronic shortage of manpower. This resulted in the use of coercive or forced labour. Conscripted labour was at its most brutal in the early days of colonialism, when efforts were made to intensify the production of indigenous products such as natural rubber. Most of the atrocities associated with forced labour occurred in the Congo Free State and in French Equatorial Africa; the Germans, too, resorted to it in Kamerun, albeit on a smaller scale. Compulsory labour was used in the building of roads and railways, portage and other government work. Government officials sometimes resorted to coercion on their own initiative but they also used chiefs to recruit for them. Taxation and other fiscal methods were other indirect forms of recruitment. The nature of coercion took many different forms and varied in intensity. In communities where tribal cohesion was strong, a recruiter could not make contracts with individuals and had to work through the local political authority. These workers were often supplied in return for specific payment. This system was therefore quite different from the use of brute force – which indeed also occurred.

Conscripted labour was usually associated with a backward economy where technological aid was limited, supervision poor, labour output low, and where there were no

economic incentives. Demand for this labour often exceeded the supply. While some colonists could afford to wait until the material needs of the Africans moved them to seek paid labour, mines, plantations, farming, and construction works were constantly seeking labour. The advocates of forced labour reasoned that it was justified by Africa's chronic shortage of manpower since the already underpopulated continent's population was decreasing. It was also reasoned that in precolonial times Africans were not accustomed to selling their labour or their crops on the open market to the highest bidder. European conquest had done away with the economic compulsion and organised violence that characterised precolonial society. These factors, they argued, made forced labour a legitimate form of taxation and was necessary in order to draw Africa into a money economy.

'Scientific colonialism'

When the views of 'scientific colonialism' began to prevail early in the twentieth century, forced labour ran into difficulties. The German Bernhard Dernburg was an important proponent of the new policy. He believed that proper transport facilities, good marketing techniques, training and management, and economic incentives would suffice to provide sound economic growth. The Africans were not merely wage labourers but potential purchasers of German goods, and while Dernburg controlled the German colonies, obligatory labour in these colonies was reduced. The use of forced labour by private undertakings was the first to be eliminated, but labour conscripted for government purposes carried on far longer. Shortly after the First World War it became restricted, then regulated and finally abolished in most areas outside the Portuguese empire. Eventually, international conventions largely abolished it, and its use became restricted to emergencies such as floods, certain communal projects and wartime needs.

Benefits of colonialism

In contrast to its harsher, detrimental effects, European colonialism also introduced specific benefits to the Africans. Slavery, including domestic servitude, was abolished, inter-tribal wars were stopped, and the large migrational sweeps by armed hordes which had once demolished whole societies disappeared. Freed from these threats African traders, herdsmen and agriculturists could pay more attention to their daily pursuits. Agricultural production increased and improved communication provided opportunities formerly marred by the constraints of pre-colonial times. Some learned new skills and obtained new employment as drivers, telegraph operators, printers, clerks, and interpreters, all of which widened their perspectives beyond the limits of the old tribal society. Elementary services dealing with health and education came into being, initially subsidised by private enterprise and the missionary societies. Colonialism contributed to the growth of new towns which developed into the cities of the twentieth century. Cities created new demands for food and services which stimulated the rural economy and it was in the new urban environment that the new bureaucracy developed. The towns were agents of westernisation as they did away with the old pre-colonial trade restraints such as tolls, tribute and traditional duties which the chiefs had usually levied. These advantages were augmented by the introduction of trading licences, the enforced cultivation of certain crops, hut tax and forced labour. The new colonial bureaucracies shaped the African colonies into proper administrative and

political units and gave them credit in European eyes – some African colonies succeeded in raising money in Europe for the development of railways and other public works. Furthermore this had been done with remarkably limited white manpower, which had placed severe restraints on the ability of the colonial authority's coerciveness and had limited its ability to shoulder large developmental tasks.

**Econ-
omic
growth**

Before the outbreak of war in 1914, Africa experienced remarkable economic growth. Exports increased sharply, especially from West Africa where proper economic incentives and good communication enabled some Africans to respond remarkably well. In the Gold Coast, some African farmers became the pioneers of the cocoa industry while other crops such as groundnuts, cotton, coffee, maize and palm oil became vitally important. Economic growth formed part of a positive response to the new demands of colonialism in some tropical colonies such as the Southern Gold Coast, Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda. Between 1880 and 1913, growth in their modern sectors equalled that of Western Europe.

When the First World War broke out, parts of Africa prospered and producers were able to take advantage of the rising prices of primary commodities. Mineral production increased and in regions such as Katanga and Southern Rhodesia, factories arose to supply products which Europe could no longer produce in abundance after July 1914. This is one side of the story – African resistance to colonial rule and the effects of the war brought hardship and suffering to others, as will be seen in the following chapter.

Notes

- 1 R. Oliver & A. Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 213.
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- 3 A. D. Roberts, 'The imperial mind', in A. D. Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7: *From 1905 to 1940*, pp. 25 and 495.
- 4 W. Rodney, 'The colonial economy', in A. A. Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. 7: *Africa under colonial domination, 1880–1935*, p. 336.
- 5 J. D. Fage, *A history of Africa*, p. 387.
- 6 W. Rodney, 'The colonial economy', in Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history*, p. 338.
- 7 C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, 'French black Africa', in Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7, p. 337.
- 8 T. Pakenham, *The scramble for Africa*, p. 214.
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- 10 J. Stengers, 'The Congo Free State and the Belgian Congo before 1914', in L. H. Gann and P. Duignan (eds), *Colonialism in Africa 1870–1960*, vol. 1: *The history and politics of colonialism, 1870–1914*, p. 288.
- 11 A. E. Afigbo, 'The establishment of colonial rule', in J. F. Ade Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds), *History of West Africa*, vol. 2, p. 442.

- 12 R. F. Betts, *Uncertain dimensions: Western overseas empires in the twentieth century*, p. 49.
- 13 R. F. Betts, revised by M. Asiwajo, 'Methods and institutions of European domination', in Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. 7, p. 315.
- 14 J. B. Webster & A. A. Boahen, *The revolutionary years: West Africa since 1800*, pp. 202 and 204–205.
- 15 P. Duignan & L. H. Gann (eds), *Colonialism in Africa 1970–1960*, vol. 4, *The economics of colonialism*, p. 18.
- 16 L. von Albertinin & A. Wirz, *European colonial rule, 1880–1940: The impact of the West on India, Southeast Asia and Africa*, p. 389.
- 17 P. Gifford, 'Indirect rule: Touchstone or tombstone for colonial policy?', in P. Gifford and W. R. Louis (eds), *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial rivalry and colonial rule*, p. 365.
- 18 D. C. Dorward, 'British West Africa and Liberia', in Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7, p. 416.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 416.
- 20 P. Gifford, 'Indirect rule: Touchstone or tombstone for colonial policy', in Gifford & Louis, *Britain and Germany in Africa*, p. 372.
- 21 K. Ingham, *A history of East Africa*, p. 202.
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- 23 N. R. Bennett, *Africa and Europe from Roman times to the present*, p. 126.
- 24 W. B. Cohen, *Rulers of Empire: The French colonial service in Africa*, p. 11.
- 25 W. B. Cohen, 'The French colonial service in French West Africa', in P. Gifford & W. R. Louis (eds), *France and Britain in Africa: Imperial rivalry and colonial rule*, p. 491.
- 26 Bennett, *Africa and Europe*, p. 135.
- 27 Cohen, *Rulers of Empire*, p. 47.
- 28 Quoted by Bennett, *Africa and Europe*, p. 139.
- 29 R. M. Brace, *Morocco Algeria Tunisia*, p. 73.
- 30 Cohen, *Rulers of Empire*, pp. 72–73.
- 31 H. J. van Aswegen & G. Verhoef, *Die geskiedenis van Mosambiek*, p. 21.
- 32 L. H. Gann & P. Duignan, *The rulers of Belgian Africa, 1884–1914*, pp. 85 and 108.
- 33 R. Anstey, *King Leopold's legacy: The Congo under Belgian rule, 1908–1960*, p. 33.
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- 36 R. F. Betts, revised by M. Asiwajo, 'Methods and institutions of European domination', in A. Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. 7, p. 321.

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Early African responses to colonialism

Opposition to colonialism European imperialism and colonialism sparked immediate response from the Africans. This reaction varied between the acceptance of, collaboration with and opposition to the new foreign rulers of the continent. The initial opposition came mainly from the traditional leaders and took place in the ethnic or tribal context. Older interpretations of these reactions characterised them as the misplaced actions of disillusioned rulers acting under the influence of superstition and witchcraft. In contrast to this, more recent views see the early opposition to imperialism as a well-ordered process with specific significance for the eventual development of nationalism and the decolonisation process which set in after the Second World War.¹

Different responses The partition of Africa can be divided into three phases.² It commenced when the European powers made protectorate agreements with some of the local rulers. These usually included exclusive trading rights in exchange for the protection of the European power. This arrangement suited some of the traditional rulers while others, such as Prempeh I of the Asante, refused to sanction any agreement of this kind. This phase in the partition was followed by a period of unilateral agreements between the European powers in which they parcelled out the continent among themselves. This was the prelude to colonialism and resulted in chiefs losing control over their own affairs, a situation which sparked several different types of response. One was confrontation – and this included peaceful or diplomatic reaction, but also violent resistance. In some

cases diplomatic initiatives deteriorated into violence and military action of some kind, which had mixed success. Eventually only Menelik I of Ethiopia emerged victorious from a military confrontation with the foreigners, in his case the Italians.

After the completion of partition, rebellion and uprisings continued, at this stage protesting against the introduction of colonial rule. Resistance was localised and limited to the countryside, usually sparked by the collection of taxes, expropriation of land, enforced growing of certain crops, the actions of colonial officials, the introduction of Western education, or the renunciation of indigenous culture, which affected daily life in the tribal context. In these instances, religious cults and the spirit media usually played important roles. The Maji-Maji rebellion in German East Africa is an example of such an event. In some regions this form of resistance continued even after the First World War.

There were other forms of tribal protest, not necessarily under the leadership of chiefs or religious leaders. Migration across colonial boundaries was very popular, especially in the French parts of black Africa. People living near these frontiers slipped away into a neighbouring colony to evade taxes. Others settled in inhospitable regions where they lived in camps which they defended to the best of their ability. From these settlements they occasionally attacked any convenient symbol of colonialism such as plantations, warehouses, shops, tax collectors and labour agents. They exploited the rural population for food, arms and information to continue their existence. These groups were particularly active in Mozambique and Southern Rhodesia until about 1903, and their activities have been characterised as 'social banditry'.³

Less active forms of resistance were disobedience, absence from work, feigned illness, laziness and dawdling, and refusal to plant the expected crops. The rejection of civilised institutions such as schools and churches was also common and some Africans repudiated the language of their conquerors.

Educated elite

Apart from the traditional or ethnic societies, an educated and detribalised elite group lived along the coast of West Africa. They were Christian or Muslim oriented. The Muslims, some of whom lived on the Arab-dominated north African coast and along the coast of East Africa, were also opposed to European colonialism because it signified their submission to the Christian infidel – something a devoted Muslim could not accept. The English-speaking West African Christians, in contrast, welcomed the arrival of the Europeans since they believed that a Christian education, capitalism, and industrialisation were the only prerequisites for bringing civilisation to the African continent. One of their leading spokesmen, Edward Blyden, declared: 'Our country has been partitioned, in the order ... of providence, by the European powers, and I am sure that, in spite of what has happened, or is now happening or may yet happen, this partition has been permitted for the ultimate good of the people and for the benefit of humanity.'⁴ These people thus supported any effort to declare British protectorates in Africa: this would prevent the other European powers from doing so.⁵

THE ORIGINS OF THE WESTERNISED ELITE

Emancipated slaves In English-speaking West Africa the westernised elite descended mainly from emancipated slaves or blacks who returned to Africa from the United States. This elite had its origin in a number of voluntary 'Return to Africa' movements launched by romantically oriented Afro-Americans. The first settlers arrived in Sierra Leone in 1787, and Freetown was established in 1792 as a home for free blacks who returned from Nova Scotia and Jamaica. After the termination of the slave trade, the British navy settled about 50 000 emancipated slaves in that region and these people, together with the Creoles, soon outnumbered all other population groups. After the emancipation of the slaves in 1834, many West Indians joined them and conducted missionary work in Africa. This contributed to the transfer of the Christian and Western lifestyle from the Afro-American blacks to Africa's Creole population.

Contact with the New World Christian and westernised communities spread along the coast of what became Sierra Leone, Gold Coast and Nigeria and these communities retained contact with the United States and the West Indies as well as with Britain – the triangle within which the old slave trade had been conducted. Another factor which contributed to the continued contact with the New World and England was the need expressed by these people to become educated. This led to the foundation of the Fourah Bay College, which was a theological institution, as well as the Church Missionary Society's grammar school in Freetown in 1827. In 1876 the Fourah Bay College managed to gain affiliation to Durham University in England. Not only was this a Church of England institution, but the affiliation reaffirmed the precedent forged the previous year between Durham and a college in Barbados, Jamaica.⁶ The result was a common educational experience that created 'the tendency of the West African elites to coalesce into a homogenous urban class along the coast from Gambia as far as Cameroon'.⁷ This connection promoted the feeling that West Africa had a future and a common destiny.

Pan-Africanism The contact between West Africa and the New World brought Pan-African ideas to that part of the continent. Pan-Africanism was the brainchild of Afro-Americans who wanted to prove their solidarity with Africa. Its origin can be traced back as far as 1787, when the Free Africa Society was formed, and when the American Episcopal Church came into existence in 1816. Pan-Africanism was primarily a reaction to the poor treatment that blacks experienced in the New World and their belief that if they supported Africa's efforts to liberate itself from foreign domination, their own position would improve. As these ideas reached Africa, a feeling of solidarity arose between blacks in Africa and those in the diaspora, or dispersion. The Afro-American view of Africa was, however, vague, romantic and sentimental, since they saw the continent as a unit. This did not prevent their ideas from finding acceptance in what became British West Africa, and this helped to form a feeling of self-awareness that culminated in a clerical context. Aspiration towards church autonomy developed and became the forerunner to political demands and eventually to African nationalism.

St Louis, Gorée Other focal points of urbanised, detribalised Africans and Creoles were the French communes of St Louis and Gorée along the mouth of the Senegal River. This region had

the experience of 250 years of contact with France. In the middle of the eighteenth century, St Louis and nearby Gorée had a population of about 3 000 people including Frenchmen, Creoles and wealthy black traders. According to J. D. Hargreaves, these people were well assimilated, a fact that made them liable to claim certain political rights.⁸ The local population was made up of mulattos (the offspring of a European and an African) and metis (the offspring of a European and a mulatto). These people were Roman Catholic and European in culture and some of them attended France's best universities and played a prominent role in the political and commercial life in the communes. These Christian Africans, Muslim Negroes and Creoles aspired to the position of a notable, a term designating outstanding merchants and respected members of the community.⁹ In contrast with English-speaking West Africa, there was no contact at all with the New World.

Luanda A similar group, known as the mestizos, dominated Angolan society at Luanda during the nineteenth century. They were prominent in government, commercial and law circles; their ranks produced generals, lawyers, parliamentary deputies, town councillors and mayors.¹⁰

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING ELITE AND COLONIALISM

Desire for re-form As colonialism advanced, the educated elite began to realise that their new masters did not live up to their expectations. In British West Africa many lost their government posts while traders and merchants experienced bigger and stronger European and Lebanese competition. These setbacks did not stimulate an anti-colonial attitude among them. Instead they favoured reform, especially efforts to remove their grievances, the provision of facilities for education and economic development, as well as representation on the legislative and executive councils of the colonies. To achieve these aims, various methods were followed including the formation of open and secret societies and unions, the new Ethiopian millennium churches, the use of literary media such as the press (between 1890 and 1919 ten newspapers were published in the Gold Coast and five in Nigeria, all of which were critical of the government), theatre, pamphlets, books, petitions and deputations to local and metropolitan governments. Occasionally strikes and boycotts were also used.

Organisations Organisations such as the Fante National Political and Cultural Society (1888) were formed to counter the impact of colonialism on Fante culture.¹¹ Land questions soon sparked further reaction and brought the educated and traditional elite together in the Aborigines Rights Protection Society, an organisation which grew from the Fante Political Society and focused on the universalism, utopianism and non-racialism¹² preached by Christian missionaries. This also coordinated with the view of the educated elite on the prerequisites for the development of the continent. The Aborigines Rights Protection Society was established in 1897 and thus the first concern about the position of Africans in the age of imperialism was expressed in London. A Trinidad barrister, Henry Sylvester Williams, formed his African Association there and made contact with black students in the British capital. In so doing, Sylvester Williams wanted to bring the suffering of blacks under British colonial rule to the notice of what he

considered to be an ignorant British public. Land questions formed the basis of Sylvester Williams's concern, and he handled such disputes on behalf of African chiefs. The Aborigines' Rights Protection Society's first protest was against the Land Bills of 1894 and 1897, which aimed at giving the colonial government direct control of all unoccupied land in the Gold Coast. A deputation to London convinced the imperial government that all unoccupied land in the Gold Coast belonged to some extended family and under pressure, the bill was withdrawn.¹³ Inspired by this success, the society formed itself into a permanent organisation aiming at the protection of the rulers and people of the colony.¹⁴ It launched a series of petitions against the local administration and the Colonial Office and aimed at the discussion of all government measures in order to fully understand them. It also worked for constitutional reform, called for the abandonment of direct taxation and asked for improved educational facilities.

The Aborigines' Rights Protection Society became the watchdog for the interests of the indigenous population but soon afterwards it became obvious that, in some cases, the interests of the educated elite were identical to those of the traditional elite and more successes followed. In 1906 the Society had the Towns Ordinance of 1894 repealed and offered strong resistance to legislation in the Gold Coast which it regarded as detrimental to the rights of the indigenous people – especially matters concerning forestry and land. A protest meeting and a petition to the legislative council preceded another deputation to London which succeeded in having the forestry law scrapped in 1910 and instigated an enquiry into land rights and land alienation in 1912.¹⁵

Protests in Lagos Similar actions occurred elsewhere in British West Africa. A mass demonstration in 1895 in Lagos resulted in the withdrawal of a tax law while a government attempt to regulate the timber industry in southern Nigeria sparked concerted action not only from the educated elite, but also from the traditional leaders and European shipping and timber interests. Efforts at official control were often interpreted as infringements upon indigenous interests or unwarranted attacks on the economic endeavour of black entrepreneurs – despite the government claim to have conservationist inclinations.¹⁶ Here too the elite warned the government that there was no such thing as waste land, and in 1908 a strong protest was launched against the suggested expropriation of Lagos land and the imposition of a water rate: taxes of this kind were seen as only benefiting Europeans. The Political Union, an elite organisation, similar to the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, was formed and also protested against efforts to control the press. The Political Union was less influential than its Gold Coast counterpart and gradually became a pro-colonial organisation.

Northern Nigerian moves Land matters were of equal importance in Nigeria and reaction to the Northern Nigerian Land Ordinance of 1910 aroused British interest. A West African Lands Committee favoured state control and criticised the exploitation of natural resources by small elite groups for their personal gain. This contrasted with the political realities of West Africa and was received with a storm of protest which brought the Lagos elite and the Yoruba chiefs together. A deputation to London resulted in the establishment of the Lagos branch of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Rights Protection Society to watch over Nigerian land interests. The Colonial Office denied the allegation that it was

breaking down land rights: it claimed its policy was not aimed at land alienation. Nevertheless it shelved the committee's recommendation and the status quo was retained because of the outbreak of the First World War.

FRANCOPHONE AFRICA AND COLONIALISM

Senegal In Senegal, French colonial policy directed the growth of political awareness among the inhabitants in a somewhat different direction. When the first stirrings of this appeared in about 1900, a general mood of unrest and frustration was apparent among the African population.¹⁷

Mulatto influence During the nineteenth century, government institutions in Senegal were dominated by French interests and African voters could easily be bought off – until mulatto influence began to challenge this tendency. François Carpot became the representative in Paris while his brother Théodore was elected president of the Conseil Générale in Dakar. The mulattos were essentially French in outlook and the majority of Africans, although constituting between 90 and 95 per cent of the voters, still played a purely incidental role in politics. Political awareness was slow to develop among them, mainly because of a dearth of leadership in their ranks.

Assimilation By 1900 this began to change as the influence of Western education increased and blacks, steeped in the ideas of assimilation, favoured definite integration into French political institutions. This did not mean that they were willing to shed their traditional or Muslim values. Most of them pursued a dual goal instead of complete assimilation into French society. These Africans also spoke of equal pay for equal work. Assimilation was sought for pragmatic reasons – the vote and jobs.¹⁸

François Carpot The French saw this dualistic view as contradictory to the spirit of assimilation and denied the possibility that any form of partial assimilation was feasible.¹⁹ The result was the decree of 1912 setting definite requirements for French citizenship. This eventually proved detrimental to François Carpot's political career as deputy in Paris where he had pioneered local interests, promoting Senegalese issues that affected his constituents. After 1910 he favoured the education of young Senegalese for government jobs rather than the importation of expensive French officials from Paris. This made him popular among the emerging elite and the mother country became aware that Senegal was her major colony in black Africa. When rumours of war in Europe increased in the years after 1910, France considered various ways of strengthening her manpower requirements and decided to build an African army – a step that the governor-general of West Africa, William Ponty, supported. Carpot was vehemently opposed to this and fought tooth and nail against the idea until 1912 when recruitment had already begun.²⁰ The result was Carpot's defeat at the polls in 1914 when the urban elite, who favoured service in the army in order to clarify and assure their status as French citizens, held him responsible for the 1912 decree on assimilation and voted against him. The rural people who supported Carpot's view against recruitment had no vote.

Young Senegalese

Carpot was defeated by Blaise Diagne, who gained the support of an incipient political party called the Young Senegalese which was established in 1912. This party grew from a voluntary urban organisation, Aurora, established two years previously by educated Africans such as clerks, schoolteachers and interpreters. They met to discuss ideas, act in plays, play French sport, and socialise. In this way they created bonds of friendship in an urban setting and on occasion listened to stories about Negro participation in the politics of Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guinea.²¹ This soon developed into a political club called the Young Senegalese and the members saw themselves as similar to the Young Turks of whom they read in newspapers.²² These people were dissatisfied with mulatto domination of Senegalese politics as well as the benefits Frenchmen accrued for themselves, including a monopoly to scholarships for education in France. They considered sending a liberal Frenchman as a new representative to Paris before Blaise Diagne was suggested as a candidate for the election of 1914.

The Young Senegalese provided support for Diagne in their newspaper *Le Démocrate*, and the campaign gradually changed into one of Africans versus the whites and their mulatto allies. Diagne enjoyed some support from voteless Muslims and the Lebau, inhabitants who had lost land to the colonisers. The major issue that united all citizens was the partially successful attempt launched by the French in 1908 to deprive them of their citizen rights – a claim the French questioned because of the many illiterate and often polygamous Muslims who aspired to French citizenship. Carpot did nothing to protect these rights, and when a number of their members were discharged from the army in 1911, Diagne campaigned for a law introducing obligatory military service for the then four Senegalese communes – a step that would ensure the citizenship rights of the inhabitants. Diagne's campaign included several other issues which could benefit Senegal. He favoured the termination of Senegal's contribution to the budget of French West Africa, since it was a drain on the colony's resources; he also wanted a colonial council with powers to vote for the budget of the entire bloc of colonies, and the abolishment of the poll tax. He pressed for a medical school at Dakar, advanced social legislation, compensation for the loss of land (such as the Lebau had experienced) and he also favoured the rescheduling of customs. Diagne defeated Carpot by about 2 000 votes and became Senegal's first black representative in Paris. He formed the first political party in black Africa, the Republican Socialist Party, soon afterwards.

POLITICAL AWARENESS IN PORTUGUESE AFRICA

Luanda Political awareness similar to that in English-speaking West Africa and Senegal slowly appeared among the *civilizado* and *mestiço* population in Luanda before it spread to Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea. Initially these people were not necessarily anti-colonial or anti-Portuguese as the book *A voz de Angola clamando no deserto*, published in 1901, suggested. It criticised the way in which the Portuguese had conquered the interior and pleaded for a better deal – asking for the ending of discrimination and a bigger share in the political and economic life of Angola. Similar sentiments were expressed in other publications.

Liga Angolana When Portugal became a republic in 1910, several organisations came into existence in Lisbon – the way was now clear for such groups to air their views. In 1912 the Liga Angolana was established by civil servants in Luanda and it received official recognition in the following year, shortly before another body, the Gremio Africana, split from it. The formation of the Liga Angolana was followed by the Liga Guineense and the Sport and Literary Club in Portuguese Guinea. These bodies had a close relationship with the Portuguese Democratic Republican Party and they cooperated in attempts to gain the status of an overseas province for the colonies with representation in the parliament in Lisbon. This move failed, however, and the Liga, lacking substantial popular support, became a mouthpiece for mestiço dissidents. There was occasional contact with republican groups and black *civilizados* and the group sometimes spoke out against the forced labour policy of the Portuguese.

NATIONALISM IN MUSLIM NORTH AFRICA

Egyptian nationalism After Urabi's military defeat in 1882, Egyptian nationalism went into decline. The strongest protest against the British occupation came from people in exile who tried to incite public opinion against the foreigners. Ten years later in 1893 nationalism was revived and the first signs of this reaction came from the arrogant, self-opiniated and autocratically inclined khedive Abbas Hilmi (1892–1914). Shortly after his accession to the throne, Egypt's new Austrian-educated khedive, who understood the intrigues of Egyptian court life well,²³ decided to uphold the prerogatives attached to his position and he appointed a prime minister of his own choice without consulting the British proconsul, Lord Cromer. Such action was totally unacceptable to Cromer, who forced Abbas's prime minister to resign. Abbas himself had to make a written statement in which he agreed that, in future, he would act in accordance with British wishes. This humiliation of Egyptian nationalism was followed up by a strengthening of British control, and the quasi-protectorate became more British in character with a marked increase in the number of British officials, underlining the fact that the khedive was in reality powerless to act independently.

Mustafa Kemal Abbas immediately made common cause with other nationalists such as Mustafa Kemal. They believed that they could use the envy of other powers such as France to force the British out of the country. Support came mainly from the younger civil servants who saw the khedive's humiliation as a threat to their only possibility for promotion. Hilmi also subsidised an anti-British newspaper, *al Muayyad*, which propagated the ideas of the nationalists in exile.

The reconquest of the Sudan in 1898 and the conclusion of the Entente Cordiale between France and Britain in 1904 confirmed French recognition of Britain's position in Egypt. It also gave the British presence in Egypt international respectability and dashed the nationalist hope that they could oust the British with French aid. This made a possible British withdrawal even more unlikely and Kemal and other members of the middle class, who tried to convince the Egyptians that they would be able to govern themselves, began to use the disenchantment of the peasants to further their cause. This move was given added impetus by the introduction of special courts in 1895 which

would hear cases against members of the occupational forces. The Denshawai incident (1906) and the proposal that the return of the Suez Canal, scheduled for 1968, should be deferred for another forty years, also inflamed nationalist dissatisfaction.

Rising nationalism

Egyptian nationalism was rising, and in the last few months of his rule Cromer could not venture out into the street without a bodyguard. Although Kemal's National Party, established in 1907, openly organised boycotts and demonstrations, this party was aimed at the small middle class and it suffered a setback when Kemal died a year later. His successor was incompetent and it became clear that Egyptian nationalism lacked real unity and mass support. Another party, the Umma, was formed in 1907. Its founders were Egyptian intellectuals who enjoyed British support. Their aims were similar to, but more moderate than, those of the National Party. They were willing to cooperate with the British and wanted to introduce social and educational reforms and to modernise Islamic ideas, because they found European ways of government acceptable. Evolutionary change was the basis of their views.²⁴ Their pro-British stance, however, did not fire the imagination of the people and they did not attract strong support. A third group, the Constitutional Reformers, identified with the interests of the khedive. These three groups and several others were not, in essence, political parties: instead, they could be described as political circles who paid no attention to social and economic questions. National independence was their only concern and this made Egyptian nationalism 'disunited and predominantly elitist'.²⁵

Reforms Under Cromer's successor, Sir Eldon Gorst, attempts were made to heal the breach with the khedive. Gorst tried to revive the Dufferin constitution, which had fallen into disuse; he ended the practice of loading the administration with Britons and admitted that he believed Britain should limit her intervention to matters that affected only it. The moderates supported this policy, and at the same time Kemal's death weakened the position of the extremists, whose concern was to curtail the khedive's powers. The proposals with regard to the retrocession of the canal and the inability and unwillingness of the legislative council to control the press were detrimental to the position of the moderates. Gorst's successor, Kitchener, reintroduced press censorship in 1911. Kitchener's main contribution, however, was in the constitutional field, and despite political instability the British tried to advance Egypt towards self-government. A new legislature replaced the existing one in 1913, and although it remained an advisory body, it consisted of 66 members elected by the people. At the same time, municipal and provincial councils also received effective power at local level. The new legislative assembly met only once before the outbreak of the First World War. Turkey (to whom, technically, Egypt belonged), joined the Central Powers – Britain's enemies. In December 1914 the British changed their minds about Egypt's status and proclaimed a protectorate headed by a high commissioner, while a sultan replaced the khedive. To placate Egyptian and Muslim dismay Britain assured the country that it alone would defend Egypt and that no Egyptian would be called upon to participate in the war. Progress towards eventual self-government was also foreshadowed.

Tunisia In Tunisia, modernisation started before the French took control in 1881. A constitution was in force between 1861 and 1864 and by 1870 there was an efficient administration

based on Islamic principles, although it did not grant real control to the Tunisians. After 1881 the French followed a pragmatic and flexible policy and tried to identify with the educated elite from the Sadiki College, an institution which offered a westernised education. But the French enthusiasm for westernisation gradually antagonised the more conservative-minded because they experienced it as a threat to Islam. A revival of nationalism therefore set in under Egyptian inspiration. Quarrels amongst themselves left the elite group few choices other than conservative traditionalism, a tendency the French began to welcome after 1905 when they became increasingly annoyed by the criticism directed against them.

Young Tuni- sians

A break between the elite and the French resulted from the political representation the government granted to the settlers as part of their official colonisation programme. Criticism of the French increased from 1905 and resulted in the formation of the Young Tunisians in 1907. The founders were students, steeped in the whole range of French ideas, from which they chose egalitarian republicanism. They wanted to improve the position of the Muslims, and propagated their ideas in the columns of a newspaper, *Le Tunisien*, and in self-improvement societies.²⁶ They did not think in terms of assimilation with the French but in terms of equality as people in their own right. They made moderate demands for rights in accordance with the terms of the protectorate, although their approach was more radical. Sheik Thaalbi's Salafiyya movement joined their ranks in 1909 and this gave the Young Tunisians a religious as well as a constitutional character, because the Salafiyya emphasised an inner change of heart. *Le Tunisien* appeared afterwards in both French and Arabic. The Young Tunisians could hardly be anything but anticolonial.

Together the Young Tunisians and the Salafiyya form an important dimension of the nationalist movement that developed in Tunisia. Their protest against the Italian invasion of Libya in 1911 demonstrated their influence. Excitement also ran high in November of that year when they protested against a proposal to put a Muslim cemetery under French control in order to expand a nearby stone quarry. Troops had to quell the riot that was provoked. In 1912 further disturbances occurred after an accident in which a child was killed by a tram. The Young Tunisians turned these events into a labour dispute; a boycott and a successful demand for equal pay for Tunisian employees with the Italian employees of the tram company followed. Shortly before the First World War broke out, political agitation, protest and workers' demands were clear evidence of the birth of Tunisian national consciousness, coinciding with similar signs in Egypt.²⁷ Under the circumstances, the French were forced to maintain martial law until 1921.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

At- tempts at neu- trality

The First World War was essentially a struggle between the powers of Europe. Missionaries in Germany, France and Britain, as well as organisations such as the British Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, felt that Africa was not at the heart of the conflict and should not get involved. In their opinion this would only have demoralising results for the continent and the European empires. There were other attempts to keep Africa neutral, too. Belgium's attempt to secure the neutrality of the

Congo basin in terms of the Berlin Act of 1885 met with as little success as its effort to maintain its own neutrality. The suggestion of the governor of Togo that the colony be neutralised also failed – the Allies did not pay the slightest heed to this suggestion. The British, French and Belgian colonies were committed to the Allied side and the German colonies became involved on the side of the Central Powers. Independent Liberia sided with the Allies when the United States intervened in the struggle in 1917, while Ethiopia's pro-Muslim boy-emperor tended to side with Turkey before Christian nobles defeated him in 1916. Nearby Darfur, still at that stage independent from the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, reacted favourably to a Turkish call by raiding Chad, threatening Borno in Nigeria and stirring up a revolt in Kordofan before its sultan was defeated and killed in 1916. Italy and Portugal joined the Allies in 1915 and 1916 respectively, but their colonies were not of great significance in the war.

The military impact

Use of African manpower

Military action in Africa was insignificant compared with the battles that ravaged Europe in the four years that followed the declaration of war in August 1914. This is not to say that Africa's involvement was of minor significance, because both hostile camps made large demands on the continent's manpower, both as soldiers and as porters to support the war effort. With the exception of the campaign in German South West Africa, African troops were used extensively to quell uprisings on the continent, on the Western Front and in the Middle East. This was a natural extension of their use by the colonial powers during the partitioning of Africa and the subsequent pacification of the African colonies. In German East Africa the Germans were served loyally by askaris, the Belgians used the Force Publique, and, in the case of Britain, the King's African Rifles and other forces from West Africa fought valiantly against the Germans in that region.

French use of African troops

The French exploited this source of manpower to the full, especially on the Western Front, and in November 1918 a large part of the French army was made up of colonial battalions drawn mainly from Africa. At that stage of the war the British Imperial War Cabinet was under strong pressure to increase recruitment of African soldiers to be employed in Europe as well as the Middle East where Indian troops were already doing service. The Belgians, perhaps under British diplomatic pressure, entertained the idea of utilising askaris from the Force Publique on the Western Front.²⁸

It is claimed that over one million Africans were involved militarily in this war,²⁹ and although the Germans were falsely accused of militarising their African colonies, it was the French who were doing so. They were utilising these troops on the Western Front despite complaints by a horrified Germany that it was a contravention of international law.³⁰ The French began to raise battalions of black troops from 1900 and in 1912, shortly before the war broke out, steps were taken to create a permanent black army by making military service compulsory for all African males between the ages of 20 and 28. An army of 14 000 troops was formed in this way and in September 1914 all Senegalese battalions were transferred to the front. The war transformed French West Africa into a source of black manpower and despite the fact that compulsory military

service was generally unpopular, it was decided to recruit a further 15 000 men during 1915–1916.³¹ The African elite favoured compulsory military service and used it to extract further political concessions from the metropolitan government – and after the extension of compulsory military service to the four Senegalese communes, France recognised the inhabitants' claim to full citizenship. By November 1917 the new measures provoked strong reaction from Governor-General Joost van Vollenhoven, who complained that they were not only draining the region's manpower beyond its limits but were making it impossible to comply with increased demands for higher food production in the federal block. Increased military conscription pushed the number of troops from the area up to 90 000. Van Vollenhoven was not the only one who resented this – conscription evoked large-scale resistance and an unwillingness to comply with the demands it made. Because of this, the French turned for help to an African of high standing, Blaise Diagne, who favoured military service of this kind. Diagne saw the situation as an opportunity to bargain for equal rights.³² He was made commissioner for recruitment and was promised a package of political reforms including exemption from forced labour and the *indigénat* if he could recruit a further 40 000 men. He succeeded in doing so, and more than 60 000 men were recruited by November 1918, including some from French Equatorial Africa, although they did not see service in Europe. Others came from Morocco, Algeria and Madagascar. Eventually about 680 000 men supported the French war effort in France while some were used in Morocco and the Middle East.

Migration to France In addition to troops, carriers or porters were recruited on a massive scale and it is calculated that three porters were necessary to support each fighting soldier. Arabs from North Africa were used to work in the factories when conscripted Frenchmen left the work benches unmanned. This began a process of voluntary immigration of labour to France (especially from Algeria) and 238 000 such labourers worked at the docks, and on the railways and other communication systems in that country. There were also 23 000 Egyptians who filled similar positions.³³

Recruitment There were three forms of recruitment. Many volunteered both as soldiers and as porters – colonial officials were surprised at the number of men who offered their services on this basis. Recruitment in Senegal was easy since many men were looking for work at the docks, and could be persuaded to enlist. In Nyasaland some were turned away because of lack of training facilities and supplies. Other volunteers saw military service as an opportunity of regaining the warrior status they had lost after the partitioning. Other motives included lust for adventure, the chance to associate freely with the armed forces of the colonial master, and the economic opportunities offered by military service. Large numbers of impoverished Egyptian peasants were certainly attracted by the wages porters could earn.

Forced recruitment It is maintained that the greatest number of Africans were recruited against their will.³⁴ Initially recruitment was undertaken through the chiefs, who were expected to deliver quotas of men in accordance with the demands made by political officers. In some regions there was no difficulty in finding genuine volunteers but the opposite was certainly true in other regions. This sometimes contributed to the unpopularity of chiefs

– as in Northern Rhodesia.³⁵ Chiefs rounded up sick men and ex-slaves, or even went on slave-raiding excursions to obtain their quotas in an effort to avoid enlisting their subordinates or kinsmen. Many Africans wanted to escape this, and in French West Africa some fled into the bush or crossed the border into another colony. The complete depopulation of some regions resulted, while in other regions as much as half of the population disappeared. Some even mutilated themselves in order to be declared unfit for military service, while many recruits deserted because of dissatisfaction with their wages or unwillingness to become part of a European war. The counteraction to this evasion was the use of disguised methods to invoke voluntary recruitment. French authorities retaliated by holding villages collectively responsible or by hunting down some of the fugitives – steps that sparked three revolts. In all three cases the risings were based on preserving traditional values.³⁶

Conscription

The third form of recruitment was conscription as practised by the French. This also developed in British East Africa where all males between the ages of 18 and 45 became liable for military service in 1915. The Ugandan Protectorate followed suit in 1917. There was forced recruitment of porters in Northern Rhodesia, Heavy demands that developed on the Syrian front obliged the British protectorate government in Egypt to conscript men and requisition animals despite their undertaking not to involve locals in the war. Tunisia, Algeria and the Belgian Congo also provided 260 000 porters.

African contribution in Africa

Africans made a decisive contribution to the outcome of the struggle. They were involved in almost every theatre of the war, but their greatest share was in the campaigns on their native soil. The brief Togo campaign involved African soldiers on both sides, while carriers also played a vital role. In German South West Africa, Africans were enlisted to manage railways and other transport such as ox-wagons. Portuguese Africans took part in the feeble attempts by the Portuguese to stop German raids. There was a two-year struggle in Cameroon where both British and French troops fought against German askaris before the defenders escaped into adjacent Spanish Rio Muni. Here porters again played a vital role. The longest campaign in Africa was fought in German East Africa and, though other nations were involved, Africans bore the brunt of the hostilities. While the German 'Schutztruppe' served their masters with undaunting loyalty, the Allies made use of the King's African Rifles as well as units from the Belgian Congo, Mozambique, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Somalia, Gold Coast, Gambia and Nigeria. Because the Germans had destroyed rail and road links early in the campaign, porters did the most arduous work in the region, often with 'inadequate equipment and clothing, extraordinarily heavy loads, and shortages of food'.³⁷ These conditions were common in the African theatre of the war and the death rate was very high.

On the Western Front

African troops played an equally vital role on the Western Front, where they participated in important battles in every phase of the war. In 1917 African units were used to quell an uprising when metropolitan units mutinied. French comrades-in-arms recognised the calibre of these soldiers, who distinguished themselves as individuals and as units. Senegalese battalions were also involved at Gallipoli, Morocco, Djibouti and in the Red Sea region. After the cessation of hostilities, Africans continued to serve in the

armies of occupation, not only in the conquered German territories but also in Mesopotamia and the occupation of the Rhineland. This latter step was experienced by the Germans as an insult because they had expressly objected to the use of African troops in the European theatre of war shortly after hostilities had begun. Others criticised the use of Africans in this way as exploitation, maintaining that it kept the Africans out of their natural surroundings with ill effects to their health. The Bolshevik Leon Trotsky also argued that Africans were misused to suppress the revolutionary masses of Europe. Many were unable to return home immediately since demobilisation dragged on into 1919, while many porters were kept away from Africa in a vain attempt to prevent the spread of influenza during the pandemic in 1918.

Economic implications of the war; British trade benefits The Germans were Africa's principal traders, and the outbreak of war changed the pattern of African trade with Europe. After August 1914 Germans were excluded from colonies such as Sierra Leone, where they handled about 80 per cent of the region's export and import trade. The British became the main beneficiaries both here and in the French colonies, where the withdrawal of traders because of conscription benefited the British to such an extent that by 1917 they held 75 per cent of the region's trade. This tended to underline the view held by some that the war in Africa was fought for the benefit of British trade.³⁸

Effects on producers The war initially brought disruption, because the prices of Africa's primary products dropped and imported goods became more expensive because of shortages. This economy soon recovered as prices of products related to the war effort, such as Egyptian cotton, boomed. The introduction of price control prevented some producers from benefiting excessively from this, while others were constantly on the losing end. Gold Coast cocoa, for example, was not in such demand as oil seeds, and the ability of some undertakings to buy and sell was damaged by the withdrawal of European personnel. Although the prices of imported goods increased throughout the war, it did not affect the majority of Africans in the subsistence sector. Those in the wage-labour sector and those who produced export crops, for example the Egyptian peasants, did not benefit from the higher prices because of the increasing cost of fuel, clothing and cereals.

State intervention in trade There was an increase in state intervention in Africa's economy in the form of price control, the requisition of food crops, compulsory cultivation, the recruitment of labour and the allocation of shipping space. This benefited the import and export trade of the mother countries. Subsistence crops such as yams, manioc and beans, which were needed to feed the troops, harmed the subsistence sector and where such food was requisitioned at prices below the current market prices, the producer suffered. In Egypt the fellahin could hardly keep body and soul together by 1918 because inflation and the requisitioning of food and animals made heavy demands on their income. In French West Africa the initial official view that the colonies could not make any economic contribution to the war effort changed when France began to suffer serious food shortages in 1916. Demand then increased, placing an onerous responsibility on an area suffering from depletion of its male population owing to military demands. France also turned to Madagascar, Tunisia and Morocco for supplies of foodstuff.

Labour shortages Another consequence of the large-scale use of Africans as troops and porters was increasing labour shortages. Recruitment in Northern Rhodesia cut Southern Rhodesia and Katanga from their source of labour, and the Belgians were obliged to use forced recruitment to keep their mines in operation. The influenza pandemic of 1918 exacerbated the position and labour shortages spread to Kenya and Southern Rhodesia. These shortages occurred among the whites too, and strengthened the move towards trade unions.

Positive effects of war The war also had positive results. The shortages of fertilisers and implements stimulated the development of replacement industries, and in colonies such as the Belgian Congo the emphasis shifted to self-sufficiency. This was true also of German East Africa, while the concentration of troops in Egypt placed more money into circulation. There was development of roads and ports in some areas, but colonial governments suffered because there was a lack of income because of decreased import duties. Nevertheless, some managed to carry the cost of dealing with uprisings and make some grants to the mother countries to support the war effort.

The political impact

Educated elite The war caused a large-scale withdrawal of European personnel who had been called up for military service. A general slowing down of essential services seriously hampered the government's ability to deal with armed insurrections and other forms of protest that some areas experienced. The absence of colonial officials created opportunities for the educated elite to fill these vacancies and in some cases Africans were especially trained for this purpose. This explains the support the educated elite gave to the war effort.³⁹

John Chilembwe and the struggle against colonialism Not everyone took this line, however; there were some who opposed the participation of Africans in the war. Among them was John Chilembwe. Although he failed to fulfil his aim, Chilembwe stood in the forefront of the large number who took up the struggle against colonialism. He was a product of the sectarian separatist church movement that had its origin in Nyasaland at the beginning of the century, and his mentor was the British missionary Joseph Booth. After a three-year stay in the United States, Chilembwe returned to Nyasaland where, apart from preaching the gospel and trying to uplift his fellow blacks, he agitated against the conscription of blacks for the war. He maintained that the war had nothing whatsoever to do with Africans and that they would certainly obtain no benefit from it. The anger aroused by conscription was aggravated by a general famine in the colony, and feelings ran high. A petition in the form of an open letter to the *Nyasaland Times* to air their grievances failed to have any positive effect, and this was followed by a short rebellion that broke out on 23 January 1915. This was put down in a few days and Chilembwe was shot while attempting to flee into Mozambique. The British feared that he would make contact with the Germans, a view that was apparently not altogether without foundation. Chilembwe's conduct had strong religious undertones that linked him with the Kitawala Movement in the Rhodesias, where the imminent end of the world was preached. Similar movements could be found in the delta area of the Niger where the demise of the British government was

proclaimed. Another group, the Mumbo cult in Kenya, was convinced that the European enemy would soon disappear.

**Revolts
against
Euro-
peans**

Not all reaction towards the Europeans in these years was religiously inspired. Revolts in French Dahomey and Nigeria point to their efforts to regain an independent way of life as it had been before the arrival of the colonials – a desire that can be observed in many of the revolts that occurred in French West Africa. The Egba rising in southern Nigeria was a protest against the loss of their semi-independent status at the outbreak of the war in 1914. There was a similar attempt in Madagascar where the Merina elite, who had previously protested against the stringent test introduced for assimilation, formed a secret society in 1913 which became the core of the nationalistic movement on that island. In 1915 it was accused of a plot to oust the French and restore a Malagasy government – but at the end of the war its leaders were released from prison.⁴⁰ In Libya, resistance to the Italian conquest continued after the outbreak of war in Europe, while Morocco's pro-consul, Louis-Hubert Lyautey, feared insurrection if he withdrew to the Atlantic – and instead sent half of his force of 70 000 men to the front in Europe.

**Tur-
key's
call for
a jihad**

Turkey's entry into the war on the side of the central powers formed a major problem for the Allies since she made a call for a jihad or holy war against them. It was feared that this could influence the Muslim population, and the Allied colonial authorities went to great pains to assure their Muslim subjects that the war was not against Islam. The Turkish call for a holy war evoked less response than the Allies had feared. There was some sympathy in Für and the British experienced anxious moments when the Sanusi from Libya attacked Egypt in November 1915. They were eventually defeated but subsequently scored a major victory over the Italians. This was followed by more victories after the Italians had shifted the bulk of their forces to the Austrian front in Europe. By 1917 Italy was on the verge of losing her North African colony altogether. Events in Libya echoed a sympathetic response in Tunisia where France needed 15 000 men to suppress a revolt, while considerable discontent was present among Muslims in French Niger and in Chad.

**Arab
dissatis-
faction**

After 1915 the Germans tried to spark a Muslim rising against the Allies but the activities of T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) prevented this from succeeding. But the events surrounding this tug-of-war between the European combatants for the allegiance of the Arabs evoked dissatisfaction with their lot and stimulated nationalism to such an extent that the European colonial powers in North Africa faced serious problems after the war.

The psychological impact

**Changes
in at-
titude**

The impact of the war was perhaps the most significant on this level. Africans in military service suddenly became part of a much wider and unfamiliar world which they had to share with people of different racial and cultural origins and backgrounds. This changed their outlook and attitudes towards their colonial masters. From their point of view it was truly remarkable to see white men fighting each other – something which had not happened during the partition of Africa. What is more, Europeans were

encouraging Africans in uniform to kill white men, who until then had been regarded as sacrosanct because of the colour of their skin. Fighting and dying alongside whites wiped out all differences, because the Africans realised that whites were not only human – there were also things they did not know. A new scepticism was born and, as the well-known missionary Albert Schweitzer wrote in 1922, many blacks were puzzled that whites who brought them the Gospel of Love were ‘murdering each other, and throwing to the winds the commands of the Lord Jesus. When they put the question to us we are helpless ... How far the ethical and religious authority of the white man ... is impaired by this war we shall only be able to measure later on. I fear that the damage done will be very considerable.’⁴¹

In-
fluence
of re-
turning
soldiers

Returning soldiers brought a new attitude back to Africa. Their influence was soon seen in the demobilisation camps where they were responsible for strikes and uprisings. It was also seen in ensuing attacks on the authority of traditional chiefs. New vistas were opened up by the war. For the educated elite, too, it became the stimulation, if not for nationalism, then at least for more critical attitudes towards the colonial masters. As another missionary, James Dexter Taylor, detected in 1919, ‘throughout the length and breadth of Africa [there was] the throb of the same great hopes that the war brought to other peoples’. Taylor believed that the Africans were instrumental in the Allied victory, not only through their military contribution, but also because they rejected Turkish and German overtures to draw them into an Islamic jihad. This, according to Taylor, entitled the African to ‘new and larger ideas of the rest of the world, and his ambitions are awakened as never before’.⁴² Soon this surfaced in demands for participation in the government processes – in the state systems that the colonial rulers had imposed upon them during the partition of the continent.

It was not only Africa that was changing. The war brought new perspectives on the continent to her colonial rulers and it is to this that attention must now be given.

Notes

- 1 T. O. Ranger, ‘African initiative and resistance in the face of partition and conquest’, in A. A. Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. VII, *Africa under colonial domination, 1880–1935*, pp. 45–46.
- 2 A. A. Boahen, *African perspectives on colonialism*, pp. 33–34.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 66–67.
- 4 H. R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro patriot*, p. 197.
- 5 A. A. Boahen, *African perspectives*, pp. 34–35.
- 6 I. Geiss, *The Pan-African movement: A history of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe and Africa*, p. 154.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 54.
- 8 Quoted in G. Wesley Johnson Jr, *The emergence of black politics in Senegal: The struggle for power in the four communes, 1900–1920*, p. 22.

- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 10 M. Newitt, *Portugal in Africa: The last hundred years*, p. 144.
- 11 A. A. Boahen, *African perspectives*, p. 68.
- 12 D. Chanaiwa, 'African initiatives and resistance in southern Africa', in Boahen, *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. VII, p. 197.
- 13 M. H. Y. Kaniki, 'The colonial economy: The former British zones', in Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. VII, p. 390.
- 14 M. Crowder, *West Africa under colonial rule*, p. 422.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 411.
- 16 Crowder, *West Africa*, p. 423, and D. C. Dorward, 'British West Africa and Liberia', in A. D. Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7, *From 1905 to 1940*, p. 410.
- 17 Wesley Johnson Jr, *The emergence of black politics*, p. 23.
- 18 G. Wesley Johnson, 'The impact of the Senegalese elite upon the French, 1900–1940', in G. Wesley Johnson (ed.), *Double impact: France and Africa in the age of imperialism*, pp. 153 and 155.
- 19 Wesley Johnson Jr, *The emergence of black politics*, pp. 124–125.
- 20 Wesley Johnson, 'The impact of the Senegalese elite upon the French', in G. Wesley Johnson (ed.), *Double impact*, p. 158.
- 21 Wesley Johnson Jr, *The emergence of black politics*, p. 149.
- 22 Crowder, *West Africa under colonial rule*, pp. 415–416.
- 23 P. J. Vatikiotis, *The history of modern Egypt from Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*, p. 176.
- 24 J. C. B. Richmond, *Egypt 1798–1952: Her advance towards a modern identity*, pp. 60–61.
- 25 H. A. Ibrahim, 'African initiatives and resistance in North-East Africa', in Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. VII, p. 73.
- 26 R. M. Brace, *Morocco Algeria Tunisia*, p. 61.
- 27 M. Brett, 'The Maghrib', in A. D. Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7, p. 279.
- 28 M. E. Page, 'Introduction: Black men in a white men's war', in M. E. Page (ed.), *Africa and the First World War*, p. 8.
- 29 M. Crowder, 'The First World War and its consequences', in Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. VII, p. 292.
- 30 M. E. Page (ed.), *Africa and the First World War*, p. 8.
- 31 C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, 'French black Africa', in A. D. Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7, p. 352.
- 32 A. Fajana & O. A. Angovin, *From colony to sovereign state: An introduction to the history of West Africa since 1900*, pp. 68–73.
- 33 K. Irvine, *The rise of the coloured races*, p. 341; G. G. Stevens, *Egypt: Yesterday and today*, p. 87; and H. Grimal, *Decolonization: The British, French, Dutch and Belgian empires, 1919–1963*, p. 9.

- 34 M. Crowder, 'The impact of two world wars on Africa', *History Today*, 34, January 1984, p. 13.
- 35 Crowder, 'The First World War and its consequences', in Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. VII, p. 293.
- 36 Coquery-Vidrovitch, 'French black Africa', in Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7, p. 353.
- 37 Page, 'Introduction: Black men in a white men's war', in Page (ed.), *Africa and the First World War*, p. 14.
- 38 Crowder, 'The First World War and its consequences', in Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. VII, p. 301, and Dorward, 'British West Africa and Liberia', in Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7, p. 425.
- 39 Crowder, 'The First World War and its consequences', in Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. VII, p. 292.
- 40 Coquery-Vidrovitch, 'French black Africa', in Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7, pp. 395–396.
- 41 Quoted in M. E. Page (ed.), *Africa and the First World War*, pp. 18–19.
- 42 Page, 'Introduction: Blackmen in a white men's war', in Page (ed.), *Africa and the First World War*, p. 2.

Colonialism in the inter-war years

Review The inter-war years were characterised by changed views about imperialism and colonialism. This did not imply any form of self-government or independence for the colonies in Africa: the European powers remained firmly in control, but they accepted a different responsibility towards their colonies that found expression in concepts such as paramountcy, the dual mandate, partnership, association and paternalism. Africa began to show budget surpluses and more funds became available for education, health, veterinary services and agricultural development. Coordinated systems of control, in which the various colonial territories were governed and developed with increasing uniformity, began to make their appearance.

Old claims This period also witnessed a belated expression of aggressive military imperialism when Mussolini's Fascist Italy conquered Ethiopia while Britain and France stood on the sidelines, doing little to prevent it. European political interests, in which the rise of Nazi Germany featured prominently, prevented effective action being taken through the League of Nations. Germany was unable to regain her colonies. Under Hitler the demand for the return of these colonies was given added impetus by plans to settle surplus population there and thus strengthen the economy of the Third Reich.

REACTION AGAINST COLONIALISM IN EUROPE

German inability to defend colonies

When the First World War broke out, the German colonies realised that the British fleet would prevent them from obtaining any support from the mother country, so they attempted to have the colonial territories declared neutral. The British were quick to reject this proposal while the French saw the war as an opportunity of regaining the territory they had been obliged to relinquish to Germany during the Moroccan crisis in 1912. The Allies' first objectives were the seizure of German ports and the destruction of her wireless stations. After the British had eliminated Von Spee's squadron in the vicinity of the Falkland Islands in December 1914, the Germans were able to do little more than undertake a series of delaying actions in Africa. The realisation of Germany's *Mittelafrika* dream could thus be achieved only by victory in Europe. Its African colonies were really indefensible; they were cut off from the mother country by superior seapower, their tiny local German populations were for the most part surrounded by Allied territories and their garrisons, although well trained, were small.

Anti-German propaganda

Allied propaganda depicted Germany as an aggressive and expansionist power, while their own war effort was portrayed as being concerned with values such as freedom and democracy. From 1915 the Germans were also accused of inhuman exploitation in their colonies, and this meant that these possessions could not possibly be returned to them after the war – hence the division of Togo and Kamerun between Britain and France shortly after they had been captured.

Colonies in East and southern Africa

In German East Africa, General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck delayed any Allied takeover and was undefeated when the war in Europe ended, but Belgium had taken Ruanda and South Africa occupied German South West Africa. Both Belgium and South Africa expected to be rewarded with these territories for their sacrifices and services for the Allied cause and Britain wanted to claim German South West Africa as part of its empire.

Lenin and anti-imperialism

Unfortunately for the Allies, the secret agreements they had concluded on the disposal of the German colonies coincided with the publication in Zurich in 1916 of Lenin's booklet *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism*. In this, he condemned the war as an imperialist struggle to bring about a redivision of colonies and spheres of influence for capital investment. This was a setback to the plans laid by the Allies and it was soon followed by another propaganda blow dealt by Lenin. On 8 November 1917 he issued a peace decree in which he made a plea *inter alia* for the liberation of the colonies. The publication in December of the secret Allied agreements for the partitioning of the German colonies was yet another embarrassment to the Allies. Many people began to wonder whether Lenin's allegations that the war had been fought for capitalist gain did not indeed contain a measure of truth. Tension and contradictions developed in attitudes towards imperialism and colonialism, which meant that the Allies faced a credibility crisis.

French, British views

Anti-imperialist groups were also active in the United States, while the British Labour Party, the French Socialists and the French advocates of the League of Nations (such as the League of Intellectual Solidarity for the Triumph of the International Cause,

founded in 1918) expressed their opposition to the outright annexation of the former German colonies. It was from this anti-imperialist feeling that the idea of international control of colonies arose. In a speech delivered on 5 January 1918 the British prime minister, David Lloyd George, condemned annexationist imperialism and spoke out in favour of the principle of national self-determination for the former German colonies. This was a revolutionary idea aimed at preventing the exploitation of the indigenous races of Africa by European capitalists and governments. By putting forward this view, Lloyd George hoped to dispel the suspicion that the Allies were merely fighting for the division of the colonial spoils.

**Wilson's
Fourteen
Points**

A few days later, on 8 January, the American president, Woodrow Wilson, delivered his renowned speech which outlined a peace plan in his Fourteen Points. Point five, among other things, put forward the view that there should be 'a free, openminded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined'.¹ This declaration was made in all sincerity by a man who was steeped in eighteenth-century philanthropic ideas. He believed that governments obtained their authority from the consent of those whom they governed, and that no country was unfit for self-government if this was granted in a reasonable way. But the point was very vaguely defined. Wilson implied that the right of conquest did not automatically grant the right to rule and that there was no place in the colonial connection for exploitation, but he did not explain how the colonial claims of the victors were to be satisfied. Although he hoped to prevent the German colonies from being annexed and wanted them placed under the trusteeship of the League of Nations, he did not clarify the way in which the status of the colonies should be changed. This ambiguity should be seen in relation to the actual claims of the Allies for colonial compensation, however. It was an attempt to effect a compromise between self-government and annexation. A month later the Inter-Allied Labour Conference spoke out strongly against imperialism, but public opinion in the Allied countries was not prepared to accept Wilson's proposals unreservedly. Various French organisations such as the French Colonial League and the National Advisory Committee for Foreign Trade were opposed to international trusteeship because they feared that this could later be extended to all colonial possessions. Wilson's ideas did not enjoy general acceptance.

THE EVENTUAL FATE OF THE GERMAN COLONIES

By October 1918 it was clear that a peace treaty based on Wilson's Fourteen Points was a distinct reality, and the Fourteen Points attracted new attention as the Allies defined their aims for peace more clearly. Wilson wanted to turn the German colonies into international property and use them to tie the Allies to the League of Nations.² He succeeded in meeting Belgium's objection to any interference with the integrity of her colonies, and calmed British and French fears by assuring them that all colonial questions would be reconsidered. Wilson made it clear that point five was applicable only to former German colonies, which would not be returned to that country. Germany

protested on the grounds that the Fourteen Points had expressly denied the conquerors the automatic right to rule. Later, this unwillingness to return her colonies led to repeated demands on the part of post-war German writers who reacted to the Allied war propaganda and pleaded for the return of Germany's former colonies.

League of Nations and trustee-ship In Wilson's proposed new dispensation, the interests of the indigenous population were of cardinal importance. To safeguard these interests the territories were not to be militarised, there was to be an open door as regards their economic policy, taxes and labour policies were to be strictly controlled, and local customs were to be respected. Wilson considered it advisable that some of the world's smaller but stable powers should act as trustees with the League of Nations as the chief guardian. These states had to be experienced enough to prevent corruption and to be in possession of adequate funds and capable officials to implement their obligations. The trustees would act in the interests of the inhabitants and the international community, for colonial administration was a matter of international concern. The whole system revolved around the League of Nations; meanwhile the claimants to the German colonies waited for Wilson to recognise their claims – which, in effect, amounted to a re-partition without the help of the United States.

Smuts and international control The parties were thus clearly divided and a compromise was necessary. This came from General Jan Smuts whose remarkable book *The League of Nations: A practical suggestion* was published on 16 December 1918. Smuts's solution was based on an idea that originated within the British Labour Party and the Round Table, a forum for British imperial idealism. Smuts proposed a scheme for the international control of territories formerly belonging to Russia, Austria-Hungary and Turkey. Two of the principles included here referred to 'no annexations and the self-determination of nations'. International control or a mandate system was regarded as a temporary system which would lead to self-government and self-determination. But as far as the colonial territories in Africa were concerned, Smuts advocated direct annexation because he was strongly opposed to any suggestion of restoration to Germany. He wrote that 'The German colonies in the Pacific and Africa are inhabited by barbarians who not only possibly cannot govern themselves, but to whom it would be impractical to apply any ideas of political self determination in the European sense ... The disposal of these colonies would be decided on the principles which President Wilson has laid down in the fifth of his celebrated Fourteen points.'³

Smuts, strongly supported by Australia and New Zealand,⁴ evidently did not intend his suggestions to be applied to the former German colonies in Africa and the Pacific Ocean, since it was generally accepted that these would be annexed by the occupying states. In his draft of the League Covenant, published on 10 January 1919, Wilson enlarged upon Smuts's scheme and made a number of significant modifications to make it more universal. He made a strong plea for his plan to be applied generally to the distant possessions of the defeated powers.

Mandate system At the peace conference, Wilson's proposals clashed directly with Allied aspirations as reflected in their secret agreements. Turkish possessions and the German colonies in

Africa had been divided between Britain and France but, in terms of Wilson's principles, there would not be outright annexation, as this would defeat the purpose of the League of Nations, which held a central position in the dispensation Wilson saw as his goal. Direct incorporation was also contrary to the idealism that had characterised Allied war aims, and to pledges made during the war to certain local leaders, notably in Arabia. Complete independence for these regions had never been seriously contemplated, and since the secret treaties had already provided for the disposal of these areas, the fate of the German colonies (insignificant in the light of the pressing European problems) was decided in the most rapid decision taken at the Paris Peace Conference.

**Out-
right
annex-
ation**

The French and British governments continued to favour outright annexation of the former German territories. In order to obtain the consent of the Allies to the mandate system, Wilson ignored German pleas to restore its colonies or to proclaim it a mandatory power,⁵ and agreed to the division of the territories as planned in the secret treaties. He also made concessions to the French, who wished to continue with recruitment of soldiers in Africa, and to the British dominions on the 'open door' since they sought to close their territories to foreign trade and immigration. Wilson's proposals, which had been designed to strengthen the League's authority over such mandates, had been whittled away by the British and the French, leaving no real difference between colonies and mandated areas.

**Objec-
tives of
the man-
date
system**

Jan Smuts and Philip Kerr, editor of *The Round Table* and former member of Milner's 'Kindergarten', formulated the objectives of the mandate system in Article XXII of the League Covenant. This declared that 'in those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant'.⁶

**Man-
dated
terri-
tories**

After Germany had formally renounced its right to its colonies, the Allies appointed mandatories or mandate holders. Britain received part of Togo and the Cameroons as B-mandates and governed these as integral parts of the Gold Coast and Nigeria. At the same time the Allies moved the boundaries of the territories eastwards to bring them into line with the traditional borders that had existed before the partitioning. France, who was in favour of annexation, consulted the traditional elite of the regions it had conquered from Germany. They preferred France to stay, and it took over much of Togo including Lomé and the railways as well as that part of the Cameroons it had yielded to Germany in 1911, which it re-annexed to French Equatorial Africa.⁷ With regard to German East Africa, matters were aggravated by the uncertainty of the territory's future status. Until January 1919 it was under joint British and Belgian control and the British were reluctant to take over the whole country as this might underline the suspicion that existed in certain areas that it was in the war only for the spoils it could grab. Control of the south was therefore initially offered to Italy and when it refused, it was offered to the United States. Only after the Americans had also rejected the suggestion did the

British, on the insistence of Smuts, agree to take over the territory as a B-mandate, from then known as Tanganyika.

German
South
West Africa

The Belgians took control of Ruanda and Urundi in 1919 and administered the regions as integral parts of the Congo. Much uncertainty and soul-searching surrounded the future status of German South West Africa. G. L. Beer was of the opinion that the territory was so dependent on South Africa that it could not qualify as a mandated territory. In 1919 Lloyd George expressed the same opinion when he said that the territory ought to be administered as an integral part of the Union of South Africa. Some prospective mandatories doubted whether they could establish effective forms of government in these regions, but South Africa felt that it could make its mandate (which was designated a C-mandate) effective. At the Peace Conference in Paris, Wilson also expressed the hope that the Union would administer the territory in such a way that the population would subsequently ask for incorporation.⁹ South West Africa was formally transferred to the Union in 1919, and Wilson's wish brought to the fore the first of many problems concerning the status of this territory. Smuts was unwilling to administer South West Africa formally as a fifth province of the Union, and declared that the League of Nations had nothing to do with the granting of the mandate to South Africa. The Allies agreed with Smuts and according to them, the relationship between the Union and South West Africa included everything short of annexation, a view which was rejected by the Permanent Mandates Committee.

THE IDEA OF TRUSTEESHIP

Trustee-
ship

Trusteeship was essentially a British idea and was a direct outcome of the war, which had changed the attitude of the colonial powers towards their African colonies. Circumstances had placed heavy demands on the human and material resources of the African colonies. France had relied heavily on Africa as a source of troops while the British Colonial Office had had to deal with increasing pressure from the War Office to make more extensive use of blacks as soldiers in the East African campaign. Dependence upon African products increased too. Imports of raw material from sub-Saharan Africa grew from 2 per cent between 1909 and 1913 to 4.3 per cent between 1919 and 1923, and the colonial governments also had a small share in paying the cost of the war.¹⁰ Africa's contribution to the Allied war effort and the common experience of the horrors of war influenced the image of the European as seen by their colonial subjects. It also brought Africans and Europeans closer together and created a feeling of obligation towards the Africans in European circles. This sentiment resulted in the trusteeship idea which was embodied in the mandates system.

Aims of
system

Since the African mandates were regarded as being incapable of independence, their wellbeing was declared to be 'a sacred trust of civilisation' and the mandatories were pledged to suppress slavery, the slave trade and the use of forced labour for private gain. The use of African manpower to strengthen their armed forces was also forbidden and there was to be an open door policy for Christian missions and for trade with members of the League of Nations, except in the case of South West Africa. No monopolies or concessions could be granted for the purposes of trade. Furthermore, the

mandatory powers were urged to promote the material and moral wellbeing and the social progress of the inhabitants.

Perma-
nent
Man-
date
Com-
mission

These aims were vague. In terms of its covenant, the council of the League of Nations held the authority to ensure the proper implementation of the mandates, and in 1921 a Permanent Mandates Commission was appointed to monitor events and to advise the council on all matters relating to the exercise of the mandates. Its inherent weakness was the absence of any power to intervene directly in any of the mandatory areas. Nevertheless, it represented a reassertion of the spirit that had prevailed at the anti-slavery conference at Brussels in 1890 and during the campaign against the Congo Free State early in the twentieth century. With the First World War the era of overt imperialism disappeared and a new era dawned, aimed at creating peace and economic development. The colonial powers struggled with problems related to the government of their recently conquered 'tropical dependencies' – regions considered unfit for European settlement. Colonialism was seen as an 'act of humanity' in which the colonial subjects had to be guided into the modern, technically advanced world, centred upon a market-oriented economy.¹¹ Emphasis was placed on the protective role of the trustee and trusteeship gradually acquired a deeper significance which had a decisive influence on the formulation of colonial policy.

Lugard, who exchanged his role of colonial administrator for a seat on the Permanent Mandates Commission, propagated the new approach in his book *The dual mandate in British Tropical Africa* (1922). In France, Albert Sarraut, minister of colonies between 1920 and 1924 and again from 1932 to 1933, also gave expression to the new spirit in his *Mise en valeur des colonies françaises*.

Lugard
and de-
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Lugard's book, which became a source of inspiration for many people, emphasised moral and material progress for the colonial communities as well as development towards self-government. In addition, the colonial power had to develop the natural resources of the colonies in such a way that the outside world could also benefit. There should be a proper balance between the two facets and to ensure this the colonial people should do as much as possible for themselves. Lugard thus applied the recognised principles of British colonial administration and adapted them in accordance with the new spirit. He recommended that indirect rule, as he had applied it in Nigeria in earlier years, should be used, and this remained an important element of British policy right up to the outbreak of the Second World War. In the economic sphere his preference was for free enterprise but, because the kind of development he envisaged demanded capital investment, Lugard realised that outside companies would also have to be given access to trade in order to supplement local colonial capabilities.

Sar-
raut's
*Mise en
valeur*

Like Lugard, Sarraut believed that colonialism would continue far into the future, but he did not share the concern of his British counterpart for the individual colonial subject. As in the past, there was no question of blacks developing along their own lines. Eventual self-government as envisaged by the British had no place in French thinking. Revised French policy tended instead to focus on association or parallel development and the emphasis fell particularly on economic reform, partly as a result of the unfavourable

vourable economic situation in France after the war. As a source of raw materials and a market for the products of the mother country the empire would help to compensate France for the economic losses it had suffered in the war. In his *Mise en valeur* Sarraut had in mind a rise in the value of nature, the land and the people. Each colony had to concentrate on the systematic development of the products for which it was particularly suited. France and its colonies were closely bound in an economic union protected by tariff walls and Sarraut called for investment in colonial infrastructures to boost production. *Mise en valeur* also implied a rise in human values, and here it was envisaged that France would replace the exploitation of one race by another with a policy of mutual association. This approach towards economic and human values meant that association and assimilation, two basic principles in the French colonial system, featured prominently in French Africa in the inter-war years.

The Belgians The Belgians were able to make a start with the intensive development of the Congo only after 1920, which at that stage had been united with the mandated territories Ruanda and Urundi. After the takeover from Leopold II, the Belgians, the reluctant owners, were confronted with enormous problems. As a people without a colonial tradition, they had to find an acceptable system that would free the inhabitants from the poor conditions they had endured during the reign of Leopold and the Congo Free State. Since the Belgians had never made a formal policy declaration, their policy can be described as 'a response to factors'.¹² During the war the Belgian attitude towards colonies changed. In the spirit that prevailed after the war, and as trustees of their colonies, the Belgians planned to create a highly developed European industrial state in Africa. The dominance of economic and social motives led to a strongly paternalistic attitude and careful supervision was exercised over the administration with a clear emphasis on primary education. Like the British and the French, the Belgians believed that the colonial era would endure indefinitely and that there would be more than enough time in which to realise their aims.

Portuguese colonies In the Portuguese colonies the tendency towards decentralisation and greater freedom for the colonies that began when Portugal became a republic in 1910 did not change as a result of the war. A change came only after 1926, when the republic fell and a new dispensation was established in the thirties. In the immediate post-war period, Portuguese attention was devoted to efforts to stimulate the national economy while the Estado Novo or New State that evolved in the 1930s brought closer centralisation; the emphasis fell on strengthening the colonial mystique and the value of the past, all with an eye to the significance of this for Portugal's future. The foundation of developments that followed in the fifties was laid in this period.¹³

BRITISH ATTEMPTS AT COLONIAL CONSOLIDATION

Imperial ambitions Although the First World War saved Portugal's African empire by preventing the suggested Anglo-German plan to divide the Portuguese colonies between them, paradoxically the war also gave new scope to empire-building. The weakening of British and French economic power in relation to that of the United States convinced the British government of the value of imperial links whether with the dominions or with depend-

ent territories on the African continent. Lord Milner, who joined the British War Cabinet in 1916 and became colonial secretary three years later, regarded the empire as the engine of economic growth and called for investment to boost production, but economic conditions were unfavourable for official investment of this nature. Instead the Treasury encouraged private enterprise, a tendency which the Colonial Office opposed. This did not deter the pursuance of imperial ambitions on the political plane. The disappearance of Germany from the continent spelt the end of the German *Mittelafrika* *Deutsch* dream and gave new hope to British imperialist dreamers about the possibility of controlling Mozambique.

**Lord
Milner**

Milner was at the helm of these efforts. He allowed the British shipping company Union Castle to acquire confiscated German shares as a subsidiary of the already largely British-financed Niassa Company which ruled in the north of Mozambique. He also allowed the British-dominated Mozambique Company to finance a railway line between Beira and Nyasaland in an effort to boost British influence in an area where there was the suspicion of commercial designs on the part of American companies. When Britain accepted the mandate over Tanganyika the road was opened for the creation of a British dominion stretching from the Limpopo to the borders of Ethiopia. The Rhodesias and Kenya were regions of white settlement to which such schemes could be linked and they formed the key to this vision.

**South-
ern
Rhode-
sia**

When the charter of the British South Africa Company approached expiry, the company chose to terminate the charter and began to negotiate the terms for a transfer. Winston Churchill, who succeeded Milner at the Colonial Office, agreed with the South African premier, J. C. Smuts, that Southern Rhodesia should be incorporated into the Union of South Africa as it could become a counterweight to the influence of nationalist Afrikaners in the Union. Imbued with the same dreams which had motivated the imperialist Cecil Rhodes, Smuts paid Southern Rhodesia a visit to try to influence the outcome of the referendum in which Rhodesia's white voters were to decide the question of incorporation into South Africa. He tried to lure them with an attractive offer, including ten seats in the Union parliament and five in the senate; there would be a Rhodesian provincial council with 20 members while the Union would take over their railways, public works, crown land and debt of R14 000 000. Because the Rhodesians were keen to undertake development projects, but were loath to pay for these, Smuts offered them a special annual grant of R1 000 000 for ten years.¹⁴ But the white Rhodesians indicated their preference for self-government by a majority of 2 775 votes. A governor was appointed in Southern Rhodesia and a parliament of 30 members was elected, but the imperial government retained control over external affairs and reserved the right to veto legislation affecting Africans. Southern Rhodesia was thus granted partial dominion status, substantiated by its participation in imperial conferences.

**North-
ern
Rhode-
sia**

The position in Northern Rhodesia was different. In 1899 Milner regarded this region as being beyond the frontiers of British-dominated southern Africa. During the 1920s things began to change and as limited white settlement occurred, Northern Rhodesia's role as a labour reservoir for mines in other countries was replaced by the development of mining within the region itself. After 1924 rich deposits of sulphide ore were

discovered near the Katangan border. The growing international demand for minerals after the depression stimulated production and the Copperbelt developed rapidly. Its potential to serve imperial ends as a link in the chain of white settlements in southern, central and eastern Africa became obvious. It was too soon to think in terms of self-government, since only 3 600 whites had settled there by 1925. The Colonial Office took control when Northern Rhodesia was granted crown colony rule and protectorate status and its first governor initiated plans to encourage white settlement. Although the region experienced some constitutional growth, self-government on the Southern Rhodesian pattern was not even considered for the time being.

Kenya In Kenya Milner supported white aspirations to the full and granted them a large unofficial majority in the colony's legislative council, while the much larger Indian community received only one member nominated by the governor. The Indians protested against this, and in reply the whites insisted on further curtailment of Indian rights, the reservation of the White Highlands for themselves, the restriction or termination of Indian immigration, residential and commercial segregation, the prohibition of fixed property ownership rights or employment service for Indians, and a denial of voting rights. These demands had to be weighed up against the significance of India's participation in the war, which had enhanced its world standing immensely. In 1917 the Imperial War Cabinet recognised its equality with the other dominions, and at the Imperial Conference of 1921 it took a definite stand on Kenya's Indians not being denied any position for which they were considered fit, on account of their race, colour or creed.

The Devonshire White Paper Compromise on these views was impossible, but the sympathy the whites enjoyed in London waned somewhat after 1922 when Churchill replaced Milner at the Colonial Office. Churchill wanted to bring Kenya to representative self-government in accordance with the pattern that was emerging in British colonial policy, and he made it clear that the principle that all civilised people should have equal rights was to apply and that Indians and Africans who met the required standards would not be denied citizenship or political rights.¹⁵ New plans for Indian representation alarmed the Europeans and they plotted rebellion. Meanwhile, delegations of both race groups held talks in London, but the political climate took a further turn against the whites with the Kenyan government's labour policy and the appointment of the Duke of Devonshire as colonial secretary. He formulated the principle of paramountcy in the Devonshire White Paper in 1923. According to this declaration, Kenya belonged to the blacks, and in future the British government would give preference to their interests when these clashed with the interests of any other race group. This was perhaps a reassertion of the Colonial Office's authority at the expense of the settlers and the authority of the India Office which championed the cause of the region's Indian population.

In terms of the Devonshire White Paper Britain claimed the role of guardian of black interests, a situation the Europeans and Indians simply had to accept. The Colonial Office remained cautious in exercising this responsibility both in Kenya and in Northern Rhodesia and any form of confrontation with the settlers was carefully avoided. Kenya thus played a central role in the British government's plans to consolidate its

own position and that of the white settlers in these parts of Africa. In 1924 the Labour government investigated the possibility of a coordinate policy in the region and also worked towards the improvement of the conditions suffered by the Africans. The Conservatives, however, dominated the proceedings of the parliamentary commission dealing with this matter and when the Labour government's short term of office ended, the new colonial secretary was Leopold Amery, who in 1919 declared that 'parliament was "in a position of trustee" to the peoples of the colonial empire'.¹⁶ The chairman of the same parliamentary commission, W. G. Ormsby-Gore, worked with Amery to create a dominion in East Africa until the end of Amery's tenure at the Colonial Office in 1929.

**Moves
to-
wards
a domi-
nion**

Economic development was behind many of Amery's efforts. In 1926 he formed a marketing board and arranged that money be loaned to East Africa for transport purposes. The marketing board then made money available for scientific research in an effort to stimulate British exports and employment. The emergence of a white dominion in East Africa was of special concern to Amery, and from 1926 the governors of East Africa met regularly in Nairobi to discuss ways of bringing about a closer union. In 1927 he sent the Hilton Young Commission to East Africa to report on the possibility of such a move. This caused great concern among all the population groups of the area. The whites felt that, in such a union, they would be completely swamped by the blacks, and there was a recurrence of white agitation for constitutional reform that would provide some form of self-protection. Sir Edward Grigg, Kenya's governor, who sympathised with the ideas of the Round Table (an organisation seeking to promote closer links between populations of British origin and culture around the world), gave intellectual weight to the belief in Britain's ability to govern other races by proposing a federal plan in 1927. In terms of this proposal, the Kenyan legislative council would have a non-official majority.

**Opposi-
tion to
the
federal
plan**

Strong opposition to this came from the Indians, whose campaign of non-cooperation against the decisions made in 1922 had continued right up until 1927. There was also African opposition and even the British government was critical – claiming that it could not reconcile such a step with its role as trustee of black interests. Instead, the Hilton Young Commission suggested a union of the three territories under a governor-general. Although the Permanent Mandates Commission favoured regional consolidation, it had serious reservations about joining a mandated territory, Tanganyika, with the two crown colonies of Kenya and Uganda in a political union. Moreover Tanganyika's governor, Sir Donald Cameron, vehemently opposed the idea. These setbacks and the fall of the Conservative government in 1929 seriously retarded the cause of closer union, while the advent of the depression in the thirties changed the focus to economic affairs. A customs union was instituted and this was followed by a postal union in 1933.

WHITE SETTLERS IN AFRICA

The presence of European settlers was central to the efforts of the British government to consolidate her colonies in Central and East Africa, and the apparent success of settlement in southern Africa encouraged Europeans to settle in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa where a temperate climate made settlement feasible. When Euro-

pean rule reached its climax in Africa about the 1950s, more than five million Europeans lived in Africa. North of the Limpopo they were most numerous in Algeria, where their numbers reached the million mark. On the continent as a whole this was a minute 10 per cent of Africa's population. Most of the whites lived in South Africa, and it was from that region that they expanded into Rhodesia as part of Cecil John Rhodes's plan to extend British influence north of the Limpopo and to curb the extension of Afrikaner influence there.

Southern Rhodesia After the whites of Southern Rhodesia had rejected closer union with the Union of South Africa, partly because they feared Afrikaner domination, their continued existence hung in the balance. Leopold Amery gave special attention to Southern Rhodesia when he visited the dominions between 1926 and 1927 and tried to boost white settlement there. The decision not to unite with its southern neighbour implied a heavy financial burden for the Rhodesians. They became responsible for the compensation the Colonial Office owed the British South Africa Company (BSAC) for its administrative costs and after 1933 were also obliged to buy out the company's remaining mining royalties. Furthermore, the trade recession of the thirties contributed to Rhodesia's financial problems. This discouraged immigration from Europe and in the two decades between 1921 and 1941 only 18 000 immigrants settled in the country.

Malawi The Central African Protectorate (Nyassaland) or present-day Malawi was another region regarded as suitable for white residence, but settlement remained small: in 1921 only 400 farmers – most of whom cultivated tea and cotton – lived in the colony. This factor and the slow construction of railways, which impeded the export trade, retarded economic growth and the reservation of the region for whites was abandoned in 1930.

Products In contrast, the economy in Southern Rhodesia began to prosper with the exploitation of gold, asbestos and other base metals. Cattle and tobacco farming also brought progress in the agricultural sector. Mining formed the backbone of the economy in Northern Rhodesia, but the accompanying prosperity was limited to the Copperbelt while the rest of the colony remained economically backward.

Economic interdependence The economic growth of Southern Rhodesia demanded more labour than the colony's African population could provide and the shortage was supplemented with labour from the two neighbouring colonies. This created an economic interdependence, since Northern Rhodesia and Nyassaland provided much-needed labour and created a worthwhile market for Southern Rhodesian manufacturers. The railway system of the two Rhodesias was closely integrated while Northern Rhodesia's copper mines depended upon coal from their neighbour for their power needs. As early as 1915 there was talk of amalgamating the three regions, and two years later the BSAC unsuccessfully tried to bring Southern and Northern Rhodesia together. In both colonies the whites opposed the idea. Northern Rhodesia feared that the government in Salisbury would neglect them, while the whites in the south were afraid of the possibility of being dominated by the large number of blacks from north of the Zambezi River.

Amalgamation In 1930 this position changed. When the Colonial Office accepted the paramountcy of black interests as a principle of policy, the attitude of Northern Rhodesian whites towards the Europeans in its colonies in eastern and central Africa changed. Initially embodied in the Devonshire White Paper and limited to Kenya, paramountcy was extended to other parts of British Africa with the Passfield Memorandum in 1929. The primacy given to the blacks provoked an immediate review of the idea of a white dominion in Central Africa. In 1935 tentative proposals were made either for the amalgamation of the two Rhodesias under a constitution conferring complete self-government or for the federation of the three British territories in central Africa. In 1938 a commission chaired by Lord Bledisloe examined the feasibility of closer union in central Africa.

The Bledisloe Commission Although Bledisloe himself favoured closer cooperation and recognised the sound economic grounds for amalgamation, the commission's report, published in 1929, regarded this step as a long-term objective that was not immediately feasible. As grounds for its view the commission cited the differing policies towards blacks, the different levels of constitutional status, the small white population in Northern Rhodesia, and the opposition of the black residents of Northern Rhodesia, which was aimed mainly at their dislike of Southern Rhodesia's native policy. The commission had no objection to the amalgamation of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland as soon as was possible, and it also suggested informal coordination with Southern Rhodesia. The outbreak of the Second World War prevented any action being taken on these recommendations.

Kenyan land and labour problems In the twenties less than one third of the about 10 000 Europeans who lived in Kenya practised farming. Their presence, in fact, created a land and labour problem that plagued the colony in the inter-war years. With the exception of the Highlands, Kenya is a barren country and the sparse African population on these highlands created a favourable opportunity for the European settlement which was required to make an East African railway a viable proposition. The fact that the land was largely unpopulated did not imply that it lay barren and unused. Epidemics, famine and Masai raiding were all reasons for the small permanent population on the grasslands which were used periodically for grazing. Further to the north, large farming communities, including the Kikuyu, were protected from the Masai by some belts of forest. Once Western medicine had put an end to the epidemics and the raiding by the Masai had been checked by the presence of the white government, the number of settlers began to increase. Through the expropriation of land, whites were able to secure farms on 999-year leases with favourable terms, and this brought them into direct confrontation with blacks who were also experiencing the need for additional land. In 1904 the first two reserves were set aside for the Masai while the Kikuyu obtained one in 1906, to be followed by reserves for three other tribes. The government also laid down that Indians would henceforth not be allowed to obtain land on the White Highlands. These measures caused dissatisfaction among Indian and black residents alike.

Labour Measures to satisfy the labour requirements of the Europeans also followed and Sir Charles Eliot discouraged independent indigenous agriculture so that blacks could

work on white farms. In 1906 a Master and Servant Law was introduced to regulate labour relations, and recruiting campaigns were soon followed by coercive measures such as a hut and head tax. In order to retain the right to live on a white farm, squatters had to supply labour and these measures sparked resistance which was accelerated by the First World War.

Division of land The land issue remained acute in the inter-war years and, although African land rights received statutory recognition as 'native reserves' in 1915, the Soldiers Settlement Scheme of 1920 resulted in blacks losing a further 12 810 km² of land. The Crown Lands Ordinance of 1924 set aside 124 000 ha of crown land as reserves, and in 1926 this was increased by the addition of land on the Ugandan highlands. The Native Trust Ordinance of 1930, in terms of which land expropriated for public purposes was to be replaced by land to the same value elsewhere, served as a kind of Magna Carta for black land rights. The Kenya Lands Commission of 1934 added another 40 000 km² to the existing 80 000 km² of reserves, but despite this, some 60 000 Kikuyu were still without land. This contrasted with the 44 000 km² of land to which the whites laid claim. The density of population in the reserves grew steadily while the whites were far too few and far too devoid of resources to utilise all of the land reserved for them. This gave some Kikuyu the opportunity to use the European settlers as a barrier against the Masai and these Kikuyu settled on the highlands as squatters.¹⁷

Algerian land problems In Algeria, in the Maghrib, a land problem similar to that in Kenya developed as a result of European settlement. The French conquest drove the Algerians from the coastal plains and valleys and the lands thus vacated were given to individual settlers or companies. Here the production of grain crops made way for cash crops such as wine, cotton and tobacco, and eventually about 27 000 km² of land, a small proportion of Algeria's total surface, was set aside in this manner. However small (the remaining habitable area extended over about 200 000 km²), the alienated region included a high proportion of arable land with adequate rainfall. Before the outbreak of the First World War, some 3 200 km of railway lines were built in the European area, allowing the transport of their produce for export or local consumption and the export of the iron and phosphates that had been discovered since the 1870s. As was the case in Kenya, the indigenous population increased rapidly, doubling itself in the half century after 1879. This caused a crisis. Deprived of good access to markets, capital and the best land, living standards dropped and the result was increased urbanisation – where jobs were not readily available. In 1911 only some 80 000 Algerians could find jobs in local industries.

Demographic structure The constitutional arrangements introduced in Algeria after 1871 favoured the white or colon population. Algeria then ceased to be exclusively a military responsibility and, with the exception of some sparsely populated frontier lands facing the Sahara, the country was divided into three large départements. In 1881 it was decided to govern these regions as part of France since the European settlers were opposed to military rule. This ignored the fact that the colons were outnumbered about seven to one by the indigenous people, who were Muslims and not French. Many of the colons were not French either, but immigrants from Spain, Italy and Malta who had gained naturalisation. Another component of the population was the 50 000 Jews who were naturalised

after 1870 but remained unassimilated. Economically the interests of the colons were also at odds with fellow farmers in France since they grew wine and grain in competition with one another.

Appointment of governor-general and elected assembly

The presence of the large unassimilated population – especially the Jews, who sparked a wave of anti-Semitism – led to a major constitutional change in 1898 when the country was placed under a governor-general and given its own annual budget. An elected assembly had to approve the budget. This body consisted of 24 elected French citizens and 21 representatives of the native Algerians, some of whom were indirectly elected and some nominated. The governor-general was advised by an upper council, of which half the members were officials or nominees while the others were elected. Some of the nominees and a minority of the elected members were Algerians. The Islamic population was totally opposed to any form of assimilation while the colons for their part rejected it because they wanted to retain and secure their privileged position. They therefore opposed Georges Clemenceau's plans for extending citizenship to French Algerians who had been loyal to the fatherland during the First World War.¹⁸ The result was an amelioration of the position of the French Algerians – it became easier for them to obtain citizenship and some were granted the right to vote in local districts with elected local councils based on the French model.

Tunisia

In Tunisia and Morocco, both French protectorates, the local rulers were still nominally in control, and France had to act in the name of these indigenous rulers. Tunisia soon reaped the economic fruits of French control when the resulting security stimulated the mining of iron ore and phosphates, which were richer than the deposits in neighbouring Algeria. The northern part of Tunisia had the best agricultural potential in the Maghrib and individual tenure developed there. French expertise ensured that security of tenure was established, and this resulted in the arrival of Europeans and the inflow of capital and technology which revolutionised the production of cereals, vines and olives. Although the majority of the settlers were Italians, Maltese and Jews, with Frenchmen making up about half of the population, encouragement to become naturalised soon increased the number of French citizens. They occupied about a quarter of the area which was exploited by the French estate companies and the Tunisians maintained half of all arable land. Until the onset of the depression in the 1930s, Europeans shared in the general prosperity and had little reason to challenge the bureaucratic and autocratic structure of the Tunisian government.

Morocco

In Morocco the French opened the coastal plains to economic agriculture and the mining of phosphates by building roads and railways to link the area with export markets. Coastal towns began to prosper despite the fact that economic exploitation had to be started from scratch. To facilitate this, settlers were encouraged to develop new crops, technology and industry. The settlers came from France and Algeria and although by the 1930s they numbered about 3 per cent of Morocco's total population, they did not impinge on Moroccan lands to any large degree. The economic development they pioneered enabled them to sustain a high standard of living.

- Other settle-ments** Italians settled in Libya between 1911 and 1942 while Portugal tried in vain to promote immigration to its African colonies in the inter-war years – many Portuguese emigrants preferred to go to Brazil instead. In contrast, the Belgian government restricted white settlement to the Congo, because it wished to protect the indigenous population from competition in both the economic and labour spheres. Whites had to fulfil certain requirements before they were allowed to settle in the colony. Those working for the big companies had to have a job with the company in question as well as a fixed salary before they were allowed to immigrate. The small number of whites in the colony were thus in the service of the government, one of the large companies, or employed by the Roman Catholic missionaries. They held posts for which they were specially trained and which local inhabitants could not fill; they enjoyed no political rights and were highly paid – this type of rule was in accordance with the trusteeship principle.
- South West Af-rica** When the Union of South Africa repatriated German officials, military personnel, undesirables and those who voluntarily chose to leave South West Africa, expectations of a return to pre-colonial times grew among the indigenous population. These were heightened by a proclamation to the effect that it was forbidden to acquire mineral or trading concessions from the indigenous population. But a return to pre-colonial times was out of the question. Some 6 374 Germans remained in the country and immigrants from the Union soon joined them. Some took up the posts formerly held by the Germans while others settled on the available agricultural land. By 1946, 37 858 whites lived in the country and various projects were undertaken to improve communications, to increase the scanty water resources, to fight disease and epidemics, and also to re-establish dispersed communities in their original areas. The immigrants from the Union enjoyed the backing of the South African government and were settled on crown land that the government had inherited from the Germans. From 1920 onwards attempts were made to create reserves for the indigenous groups, but the availability of land was a problem because the government wanted to give equal consideration to the interests of all population groups. The first 2 500 000 ha were delimited in 1925, but despite later additions, the reserves were incapable of supporting the population already settled there. This state of affairs forced many to find work on white farms or in the developing industries – something they were loath¹⁹ to do.
- Tangan-yika** Tanganyika also saw a large deportation of German citizens which reduced their numbers by a half between 1913 and 1921. In this year some 2 447 whites lived in the territory, most of them making a living as farmers in the Arusha area near Mount Kilimanjaro. British settlers bought out former German properties, but no new land was alienated despite the fact that these whites and the Indian population expected preferential treatment from the government. Holding Tanganyika as a B-mandated area, the British government was responsible for ensuring just treatment for the indigenous population,²⁰ and it went to great lengths to prevent the same sort of trouble it had experienced in Kenya. In the late 1920s settlement was viewed in a more sympathetic fashion because normalisation of relations with Germany in 1925 had made it impossible to exclude German settlers. Admitting British emigrants to balance the German numbers resulted in an increase of the white population to 6 514 by 1939. The Germans, backed by their government, regained a great deal of land on Kilimanjaro and also in

the new settlements on the Southern Highlands and at Oldeani. The total area of land alienation was only 1.31 per cent of the colony, and right of occupancy was 99 years. As a mandated territory, Tanganyika was regarded as predominantly an African region, therefore settlement did not enjoy much direct official support.²¹ In the spirit of the mandate, Tanganyika was regarded as a black man's country even as early as 1921, and it was planned to develop it along West African lines. Nigerian principles thus had an influence on land, law and administrative policy.²² As was the case in the regions where Europeans did not settle, the interests of the indigenous population, interpreted by the colonial rulers as 'native policy', enjoyed preference.

'NATIVE POLICY'

Implications The revised views on colonialism that resulted from the First World War had certain implications for 'native policy' as well. Sarraut's *Mise en valeur des colonies françaises* officially sanctioned association as the French version of indirect rule, and theoretically it was also applied to all colonies south of the Sahara. In reality the French approach stood in stark contrast to that principle, and their preference for strong centralisation prevailed. The much-quoted view of Joost van Vollenhoven, governor-general of French West Africa, that the African chiefs have no power since there are only one authority in a 'cercle', accurately describes the position. The indigenous chief was merely an instrument used directly and subordinately by the French as an instrument of government.²³ The Portuguese utilised the native chiefs in the same way.

Indirect rule Because of Lugard's successful use of indirect rule in northern Nigeria, the system was extended to much of British Africa, including the mandatory areas of Tanganyika and the Cameroons. The Belgians also adopted it in the Congo, despite the fact that conditions for its success were not nearly so favourable as those amongst the Fulbe command system in northern Nigeria. Where there was no convenient Fulbe system of rule, indirect rule did not work so well. The Ibo of eastern Nigeria, for example, lacked a central power structure, without paramount or other chiefs. After 1926 Dr C. K. Meek, a state anthropologist, did much to determine the social and political structure of society, and this resulted in a much smoother functioning of the system, although the Ibo did not accept the so-called 'warrant chiefs' or headmen appointed by the British. According to Michael Crowder the 'warrant chiefs' were frequently people who sought favour with the British and they were seldom figures of authority in the community.²⁴ Among the Yoruba of western Nigeria, traditional authority was built around the person of a strong paramount chief, but lesser chiefs and headmen had no place in this structure. Under indirect rule minor chiefs were given so much power that the position of the true paramount chief was undermined and the minor chiefs became the real 'native authorities'. After its introduction the system showed no signs of further development and stagnated until the governor, Sir Donald Cameron (who, like so many other West African governors, had received his training under Lugard), began adapting the system during the early thirties. He curtailed the power of the emirs in the north and began to look for ways of developing traditional forms of government. He ap-

pointed Africans with a Western education to the Southern Nigerian Chiefs' Council – a step that had positive results.

Position of the chief Throughout sub-Saharan Africa the position of the chiefs changed from a 'native authority' to a government agent, even where indirect rule was applied. This was a result of new demands such as tax collection, the taking of censuses and recruitment for labour and military purposes. Chiefs were manipulated to satisfy colonial needs, abolished where they were considered superfluous or, as in the Belgian case, created where they could serve a useful end. In a drastic reorganisation of local administration started in 1918, the number of chieftaincies was drastically reduced and a new administrative unit, the section, was introduced. In French West Africa some villages were grouped into a canton controlled by an indigenous administrative agent. A royal decree of 1919 placed the nomadic Libyan population into tribes and sub-tribes on the advice of the regional commissioner.

Position of the local administrator The local administrator invariably developed into a surrogate chief. According to Robert Delavignette these officials were not administrators but commanders acting as chiefs.²⁵ In the French empire, where there was a perennial shortage of personnel, he served as president of the judiciary, superintendent of prisons, director of customs, meteorological observer and special agent. This eroded the unobtrusive role he was supposed to play, especially under the philosophy of indirect rule. The Italian administrators in Somalia came closest to the British in their use of this principle despite the modifications local circumstances and personal tastes introduced. Lugard's views were hard to put into practice, even by his pupil Sir Donald Cameron when he was involved in its application in Tanganyika.

Cameron's reforms Cameron introduced Lugard's ideas there in 1926, but preferred to call the system 'Local Native Administration'. The essence of the system was exercised by the government through indigenous institutions, with administrative officers working through the traditional rulers and not communicating directly with the people. Cameron introduced a tripartite power structure. Firstly there were the traditional headmen with power to maintain order and collect taxes. Secondly, indigenous courts were reintroduced to act in accordance with the traditional judicial system. Cameron deviated from the Lugard formula and replaced the right of appeal to a higher British court. The tribal treasury became the third pillar in his administration. Cameron also attempted to create regional councils consisting of African headmen. He wanted these bodies to be the highest authority but the unwillingness of some of the headmen to abide by the decisions of the council created an obstacle in the path of his ideal.

Failure of indirect rule In Tanganyika, as elsewhere in black Africa, westernised blacks rejected the system, and by 1940 it was clear that indirect rule had failed to live up to expectations, especially where detribalisation and westernisation assumed significant proportions. Besides, the way in which indirect rule functioned was dependent on individual preferences of officials and local circumstances as well as on the reaction of traditional chiefs. Too much emphasis on the power of chiefs and paramount chiefs and the lack of opportunity for progress began to outweigh the advantages of a cheap system of government

over vast regions and the preservation of tribal integrity. Adaptations were necessary – a process hastened by the coming of the Second World War.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

Effects of world depression A short economic boom set in after the First World War, but this soon gave way to market instability and a lengthy world depression which created low prices and a poor demand for raw materials. African colonies depending on the sale of primary products were hard hit. The development that followed was unequal, and those colonies where mining enjoyed prominence grew at a more rapid rate than the others. Katanga and Northern Rhodesia, for example, saw a dramatic increase in production while Tanganyika, where exports were limited to some agricultural products, lagged behind. Besides mineral exports, the only crop providing a major impetus to Africa's economic development in the inter-war period was cocoa.

Mining The simple extraction of mineral ores alone did not contribute much to the continent's economic growth. More sophisticated mining, which supplemented the extraction of ores with smelting and refining, was more successful. This included the working of copper, coal, gold and other minerals that required special skills, as well as plants, water and electricity supply, workshops and stores. These attracted services such as telecommunication and communications. Roads, railways and harbours brought foreign capital and set off a series of activities which also involved domestic capital. This put the colonies concerned on the way towards modernisation, since the services needed to support these mining activities sparked additional needs. Towns to house the workers created a demand for building materials, fuel, food, clothing and services such as health, banks, merchants and insurance facilities. Town dwellers and farmers benefited from these developments, but the spread was very uneven – southern Africa, the Belgian Congo, and British West Africa benefited most while French and Portuguese Africa lagged behind.

Provision of infrastructure In terms of the provision of infrastructure, the years before the outbreak of the Second World War were of specific significance. Railroads were built, stretching over a distance of 51 200 km, and cities such as Ndola, Dar es Salaam and Elisabethville appeared. More than 640 000 km of roads linked these cities, towns and villages, and the arrival of motorised transport not only made communication easier, but also diminished distances and brought an end to portage as a form of transport and labour.

Influx of commodities Although the value of Africa's foreign trade dropped by 42 per cent between 1929 and 1932 and did not reach the 1929 level before 1938, the continent experienced a considerable influx of new commodities in this period. Some of these reached the remote villages in the form of consumer goods such as food and drink, and means of transport in the form of bicycles, wagons and capital investment goods such as ploughs, water pumps, sewing machines, cattle dips and fences. This created opportunities for new occupations such as mechanic, bicycle repairer, truck driver, photographer and railway ganger. Migrant workers still did the work on the mines and plantations but forced labour disappeared from the scene. The British, French and Belgians adopted the

International Forced Labour Convention in 1930 – only the Portuguese stayed out. The colonial rulers did make some exceptions to the convention which enabled compulsory military service, convict labour, and work dealing with civil obligations, emergencies and communal tasks. The French retained forced labour for public works ('prestation') until 1946 while labour performed on government projects could serve as a substitute for military service.

Responsibilities of European governments During the inter-war years, governments were not expected to transform traditional societies economically. Their responsibility was limited to assistance in the creation of the necessary infrastructure. The production of goods was left in the hands of individual entrepreneurs. The ideal of financial self-sufficiency for each territory was still strong, and each region was expected to ensure that its budget was balanced. The wealthy colonies succeeded while the poorer ones sometimes failed to provide even essential services. Officials were not equipped to promote development, and administration enjoyed much higher priority in imperial government than economic development. The colonial officials saw themselves as guardians instead of innovators of economic growth. Besides, colonial administrators firmly believed that there was 'infinite time ahead'.

Stimulation of economic growth This attitude changed in the late 1930s when world prices began to rise and the demand for raw materials increased Africa's exports and trade. Governments became more involved in the stimulation and direction of economic growth. The initial use of the state's power to mobilise labour, to force Africans to grow certain crops and to relinquish land was augmented with the protection of the Africans' interests, better industrial and mining conditions, the protection of migrant labour and the regulation of trade. The colonial state also laid the foundation for research in medicine, veterinary science, plant biology, parasitology, geology and zoology – developments that were the outcome of imperial and public capital sources which had been invested in Africa between 1870 and 1936.

RESURGENT EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM

Division of Ethiopia Italy's abortive attempt to occupy Ethiopia in 1896 did not end its ambitions to become a colonial power. A tripartite agreement between Italy, Britain and France in 1906 guaranteed Ethiopia's territorial integrity, but all three European countries feared that Ethiopia would lapse into anarchy when Menelik died. Consequently they divided the country into clearly defined potential spheres of influence. Italy was granted a sphere between its colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland which would enable it to link these regions and, after Menelik's death in 1913, London and Rome defined their interests in the region more carefully.²⁶ During the First World War, Italy was promised additional, more adequate compensation in the Treaty of London (1915) but at the peace negotiations at Versailles this failed to materialise.

Concessions The Italians claimed that the Treaty of London entitled them to compensation if the former German colonies fell to Britain and France.²⁷ They cast envious eyes at boundary adjustments with Tunisia and Egypt and wanted Kassala in the Sudan as well as land

they had had to relinquish to Britain in 1897. The possibility of linking Eritrea and Somaliland also remained alive. Britain was unwilling to yield to these exorbitant claims, and this compelled Vittorio Orlando, the Italian prime minister, to act cautiously, preferring compensation closer to home. Realising that the reconquest of Libya would be an expensive undertaking while opinion between the Italian delegates at the peace talks differed, Orlando dropped all claims in Africa. When the Fascists came to power, they regarded Italy as a country without colonies, and renewed bargaining resulted in Britain relinquishing Jubaland, between Somaliland and Kenya, to Italy. Mussolini was anything but grateful for these small concessions and declared that he was not a collector of deserts.

Ethiopia The war in Libya prevented Italy from action in Northeast Africa until the 1930s while Mussolini's attempts at extending his influence to western Ethiopia encountered stern opposition. After much bargaining Britain recognised exclusive Ethiopian economic rights in this region in return for British rights in the vicinity of the Tana River where Britain's cotton lobby pressed for the building of a dam. This would enable the country to grow cotton in the Sudan instead of Egypt, which was slipping from Britain's grip after 1922.²⁸ These arrangements made it possible for the Italians to link Eritrea and Somaliland by rail but the Ethiopian regent, Ras Tafari (Haile Selassie), who obtained membership of the League of Nations with Italian support in 1923, protested vehemently against these arrangements, which were made without France's knowledge. It is doubtful whether Ras Tafari would have succeeded in preventing the division if France had not felt that this arrangement threatened French trade with Ethiopia, which formed a vital link in its communications with the Far East and Madagascar. Consequently France declared itself willing to develop Ethiopia economically if that country continued with a modernisation program. If this failed, the 1906 possibility of partitioning could become a reality.

Ras Tafari The Italians were uncertain how to deal with Ethiopia, and there was a feeling that cooperation might bring more advantages than opposition – a stable Ethiopia might mean better economic opportunities for Italians. A non-aggression pact was signed in 1928 and the Italians became Ras Tafari's advisors. Ras Tafari, who became emperor Haile Selassie in 1930, was confronted with demands for modernisation and the suppression of uprisings and increasingly feared that Italian economic pressure was the precursor to an economic protectorate. He therefore sought friends and advisors elsewhere and used Americans, Swedes, Swiss and Belgians. Other influential Ethiopians, however, favoured closer ties with Italy and supported Selassie's opponents in Eritrea and in the colonial ministry in Rome.

Mussolini's position This presented a serious threat to the agreement. Ethiopia was not regarded as a particularly attractive proposition, and Mussolini doubted the advantages of outright annexation, fearing that France was trying to entice him into an expensive African adventure. The non-aggression pact was renewed in 1934 despite occupation of certain parts of Ethiopia by Italian troops in 1929, and nothing came of Haile Selassie's attempts to have the borders clearly defined. Tension between the two leaders increased despite Mussolini's unwillingness to become involved in Ethiopia for the sake of possible

prestige. In fact, in 1933 the Fascist internal and external balance sheet was rather poor in the sort of active steps upon which this ideology was supposed to thrive. Attempts to bring Italy, Germany, France and Britain into a four-power pact failed, while the economic depression demonstrated the uselessness of Fascist economic plans. But Hitler's accession to power created tensions in Europe. This offered Mussolini greater movement elsewhere, since he calculated that Hitler's war plans would be ready only by 1937.²⁹ Besides, the conquest of Libya had been completed and only Ethiopia remained for Fascism to demonstrate its worth. A war plan was drawn up and in 1934 Italy increased its armaments while Ethiopia reorganised its army.

**French
pact
with
Italy**

A minor frontier incident at the Wal Wal oasis in December 1934 gave Mussolini a pretext to 'restore order', abolish the slave trade and extend 'civilisation'. In January 1935 Haile Selassie appealed to the League of Nations, where action depended upon the attitude on the two strongest nations, Britain and France. Unfortunately for Ethiopia they were more concerned about the growing Nazi threat in Europe than the fate of Ethiopia. Both tried to apply sanctions, but were torn between preserving a common front against Hitler's growing power and their African interests. French fear of Hitler induced it to sign a pact with Italy in 1935 which apparently gave Mussolini a free hand in Ethiopia while there was also support for the Italians in the British cabinet. This based Haile Selassie's faith in the League of Nations on false hopes.

**Italian
attack
on
Ethiopia**

Meanwhile the League Council tried to effect a compromise, but Mussolini rejected it. The Hoare-Laval proposals for a subdivision of Ethiopia followed, but also proved abortive. By this time the Ethiopian campaign was already far advanced and Addis Ababa fell in May 1936. Ethiopia became part of the new Italian East African empire. Haile Selassie went into exile in Britain where he remained until 1940. Despite the fact that they were poorly armed, the Ethiopians chose to meet the Italians on the open battlefield but were powerless against superior Italian weapons and attacks from the air. Italian use of poison gas and aerial bombing were labelled barbaric and evoked bitter reaction from black nationalists elsewhere in the world. For black intellectuals in Africa, as well as Afro-Americans, Ethiopia was the personification of their own pride and worth, therefore they regarded the Italian attack on Ethiopia as an attack upon all of them. Various organisations held joint protests. This was indicative of a new spirit of cooperation among those who wanted to arouse Africa and evidence of a sense of national consciousness that rose on the eve of the Second World War and which created a new climate in which African nationalism could thrive. We must now turn to the development of this sentiment between the two world wars.

Notes

- 1 P. T. Moon, *Imperialism and world politics*, p. 477.
- 2 W. R. Louis, 'The United States and the African peace settlement of 1919: The pilgrimage of George Louis Beer', *Journal of African History*, vi(3), p. 417.
- 3 J. C. Smuts, *The League of Nation: A practical suggestion*, p. 15.
- 4 A. Sharp, *The Versailles settlement: Peacemaking in Paris, 1919*, p. 160–162.

- 5 W. M. Schmokel, *Dream of empire: German colonialism, 1919–1945*, pp. 80–81.
- 6 Moon, *Imperialism and world politics*, p. 480.
- 7 C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, 'French black Africa', in A. D. Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7, *From 1905 to 1940*, p. 362.
- 8 P. Giniewsky, *Die stryd om Suidwes-Afrika*, p. 34.
- 9 J. P. van S. Bruwer, *South West Africa: Disputed land*, p. 111.
- 10 A. D. Roberts, 'The imperial mind', in A. D. Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7, p. 41.
- 11 R. F. Betts, *Uncertain dimensions: Western overseas empires in the twentieth century*, pp. 48 and 53.
- 12 R. Anstey, *King Leopold's legacy: The Congo under Belgian rule, 1908–1960*, p. 37.
- 13 H. Grimal, *Decolonization: The British, French, Dutch and Belgian empires, 1919–1963*, p. 9.
- 14 A. J. Wills, *An introduction to the history of Central Africa*, p. 244.
- 15 K. Ingham, *A history of East Africa*, p. 273.
- 16 Roberts, 'The imperial mind', p. 43.
- 17 J. D. Fage, *A history of Africa*, p. 448.
- 18 R. M. Brace, *Morocco Algeria Tunisia*, p. 101.
- 19 I. Goldblatt, *History of South West Africa from the beginning of the nineteenth century*, pp. 226–227.
- 20 Grimal, *Decolonization*, p. 9.
- 21 J. Iliffe, *A modern history of Tanganyika*, p. 303.
- 22 A. D. Roberts, 'East Africa', in A. D. Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7, p. 673.
- 23 R. Hallett, *Africa since 1875*, p. 315.
- 24 M. Crowder, *West Africa under colonial rule*, p. 227.
- 25 Betts, *Uncertain dimensions*, p. 70.
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- 27 E. M. Robertson, *Mussolini as empire-builder: Europe and Africa, 1932–36*, p. 7.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- 29 D. M. Smith, *Mussolini's Roman Empire*, p. 60.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 65; D. M. Smith, *Italy*, p. 450; and A. J. P. Taylor, *English history, 1914–1945*, p. 468.



Nationalism and anti-colonialism in the inter-war years

New expectations

The First World War awakened new expectations among some Africans. These were based on the Fourteen Points President Woodrow Wilson had formulated in response to the suggestion made by Russia's new Soviet government in October 1917: peace without compensation. Wilson's proposals were to readjust colonial claims in the interest of the powers concerned and the inhabitants of the colonies. This inspired some of these inhabitants to try to realise their ambition of influencing the peace talks in their favour and thus gaining a more significant say in the running of their own affairs. Pre-war aspirations to return to the situation as it had been before the partitioning were no longer valid. The educated elite accepted the new colonial frontiers because they gained a greater influence in the evolving nationalist movement on the continent. Among the Arabs, nationalism was further advanced and demands for independence and self-determination were much stronger – as can be seen in subsequent history of Egypt and Tunisia.

NATIONALISM IN AFRICA

African- ism

In contrast to Arab nationalism, nationalism in black Africa began as a movement without a nation,¹ and a strong correlation exists between its growth and anti-colonial

sentiments. The black educated elite were soon confronted with the realities of colonialism. During the war opportunities had developed for them to become more closely involved in determining their own affairs, but in the years that followed the peace in 1918, these opportunities faded. Because nationalism in black Africa developed before there was a nation or social group with common bonds such as language and culture Lord Hailey (whose *An African survey* first appeared in 1938) used the term 'Africanism' to describe the struggle of the blacks against colonialism. He did so on the grounds that the consciousness which manifested itself after the First World War was not a true reflection of the concept of nationalism as it existed in Europe. This view was based on the fact that the inhabitants of the colonies south of the Sahara were made up of elements that had been brought together under one government by 'the accidents of history'.²

No territorial nationalism With the exception of Lesotho, most black African colonies have no common origin; the dynamic of a territorial nationalism is missing. Nationalism took a different direction from that in Europe; furthermore it contained a strong racial component since colonialism implies the domination of one race by another. Colonialism created states with diverse ethnic and cultural elements – their only common experience was subjection to alien rule.

Characteristics of African nationalism Hailey's preference for the term Africanism dated from an era when tribalism played a significant role in African life and the traditional elite suffered the same frustrations as the detribalised educated elite. The educated elite wanted to act as racially conscious modernists, working within the framework set by the colonial rulers. In the French context, they expected that their Western education would open the way to assimilation and citizenship with full rights and responsibilities for individuals. In the British colonies, especially in West Africa, the educated elite aspired to eventual independence and membership of the British Commonwealth. In contrast, the traditional elite, as poorly paid 'instruments' of foreign masters, experienced humiliation because their subordinates saw them as collaborators and became alienated from them. But it was not only the leaders who suffered under the yoke of colonialism. Among the gradually growing numbers of urbanised labourers in the cities, trade unionism was developing as a weapon against exploitation, discrimination and social injustice. Among farmers in the countryside, especially in the thirties, when economic difficulties set in, growing discontent and anti-colonial feelings developed and they protested against administrative, economic and financial measures applied by the colonial government. Cultural revival was another component of the evolving nationalism in black Africa. It was a reaction to the negation of indigenous culture by the colonial ruler and an attempt to preserve their identity as Africans in general as well as members of certain tribes or ethnic groups specifically. Because of its particular nature, nationalism in Africa may be defined in different ways. Thomas Hodgkin uses the term in a broad sense 'to describe any organisation or group that explicitly exerts the rights, claims and aspirations of a given African society ... in opposition to European authority, whatever its institutional form and objectives'.³ J. S. Coleman describes it as a consciousness among certain groups that they form a nation or are in the process of becoming one, and that they

should actively propagate or further the process.⁴ Strictly speaking, a feeling of solidarity should exist or develop so that there is striving towards a common goal. The existence of such a condition supports Hans Kohn's view.⁵ He characterises nationalism as a dynamic attitude.

Resistance The above characteristics are all peculiar to African nationalism. Other definitions refer to concepts such as forces that draw people together to protest against, or refuse to accept a given situation, group or aggression. It can be a reaction arising out of resentment, or it may entail the forging of links to regain specific rights. In all of these cases, resistance comes to the fore and the vacuum caused by the absence of common influences such as languages, religion, tradition and customs is filled by the struggle for freedom, independence and the elimination of racial discrimination. To achieve this, a European political style was adopted and given a specifically African content. It is thus preferable to speak of African nationalism.

Islamic revival Although these trends can also be detected in Arab nationalism, the latter differs from black nationalism, especially as it appeared in Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco. The first stirrings of a Muslim reawakening date back to the nineteenth century. Before the First World War it developed slowly, directed by two charismatic Islamic thinkers, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, an Iranian who preferred to be an Afghani, and Muhammad Abduh. Jamal sought reasons for Muslim culture having stagnated to such an extent that it had come under Western political and economic influence. Both of these thinkers wanted to adapt Islam to Western technology, and Jamal adopted Western ideas on scientific education, industrial development and nationalism. He realised that such reform was the only way to withstand European domination and the corrupt Muslim governments which allowed the promotion of European imperial policies in the Muslim world. The traditional leaders opposed these new ideas despite Jamal's claim that the Koran was not against such steps because it was compatible with modern civilisation; Islam was the original leader in civilisation and simply had to regain that leadership. In order to succeed with any political plans, intellectual and social reform of the Muslim world was imperative.

Brotherhood and solidarity It was felt that an Islamic revival would lead to brotherhood and solidarity of all Muslims against a hostile world. When the First World War broke out, many Muslim countries rejected the appeal by the sultan of Constantinople for a general uprising against the Western Allies. With a few exceptions in Egypt, Tripolitania and India, the Muslim population espoused the Allied cause, hoping that their loyalty would yield the desired results and bring the desired liberty. The ensuing peace treaties were a disappointment and this moved some Arab politicians to opt for unity of the Arab Islamic world instead of the entire Muslim world. From his Geneva home, Emir Shakib Arslan tirelessly promoted these ideas and he had a formative influence on many nationalistic leaders in the Maghrib. The mufti of Jerusalem took an opposing view and called upon Islam to spread the Muslim culture and organise the defence of the religion against colonialism. Despite these political divisions, there was a certain solidarity in the Islamic world which the European colonial powers could not ignore – regardless of the particular Islamic area in which it had arisen.⁶

ANTI-COLONIALISM IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Valuable allies

In their struggle for civil liberties, the Africans found valuable allies in international developments and movements. The First World War, for example, had a specific significance and most of the world's disaffected groups were drawn to the peace talks at Versailles. Another definite influence was the view held at the League of Nations that the only reason for the existence of colonialism was its obligation to develop those who had become colonised. While some wanted to make this a yardstick for assessing the imperial masters, especially the mandatories, the idea of international accountability also gave rise to political movements such as the Leninist anti-imperialist Communist International or Comintern⁷ and other socialist movements.

Communism and anti-colonialism

Limited influence

Communism and the appearance of Soviet Russia were among the more significant results of the First World War but in Africa its direct influence and membership was limited. The number of communists in Africa on the eve of the Second World War was about 5 000, of whom the majority were to be found in South Africa and the French-speaking possessions, particularly Algeria.⁸

Comintern

Communist recognition of national independence for subject races in terms of the Soviet decree of 15 November 1917 (confirmed by Stalin in a report on the 'Nationality Question' in January 1918) found a ready response among the black intelligentsia who studied abroad, and in France in particular. This literature formed the guidelines of the Comintern or Third Communist International, which was the body that formulated plans for worldwide communist revolution. At its second congress in 1920, the Comintern, at Lenin's insistence, pledged its active support for revolutionary liberation movements in the colonies. The movement attempted to find a way into Africa through the American Negroes who wanted to train black nationalist groups as 'cadres' to work for Moscow in Africa.

French Communist Party

The Comintern found its strongest ally in the French Communist Party, established in Paris in 1920–1921. Unlike the communist parties in other countries in Western Europe, it became the mouthpiece for colonial independence and interested itself in expatriate blacks. It established various organisations in order to achieve its aims, the most important being the Union Internationale, with its mouthpiece, *Le Paria*. Marxist ideas in French Africa were most strongly supported by soldiers who were demobilised in Paris after the First World War and by those who later returned to the French capital as students.

Lamine Senghor

Lamine Senghor became the leader of this group after he returned to study in Paris in 1922. He joined the French Communist Party in 1923 and organised black workers in French ports before he established the Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre in 1926. With Lenin as its posthumously elected honorary president, the Comité served as a counterweight to Blaise Diagne's influence, which (as will be seen later) became increasingly more in favour of the French establishment. Fired with a fierce spirit of nationalism and

anti-colonialism, the Comité was a militant organisation strongly associated with the trade union movement.

League against Imperialism In 1927 Senghor attended the inaugural conference of the League against Imperialism, a Comintern front organisation established in Brussels. Delegates from North and South Africa attended this meeting, where contact was made with 180 communists, left-wing socialists, radical socialist intellectuals, and representatives of national movements in colonial territories. This organisation stemmed from the work of the German communist and publisher Willi Munzenberg and tried to establish branches of the Communist Party in various European capitals. Paris was the scene of its greatest success since the French Communist Party continued its efforts to infiltrate Africa with its anti-colonial propaganda. Together with the Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre, which developed from the Comité after Senghor's death in 1927 and which was even more militant, the Communist Party's aim was to develop Africa as an independent continent for the Negro. Until 1933 this idea enjoyed the support of Messali Hadj in Algeria but because of an interest in Pan-African ideas, Algerian nationalism eventually shied away from it in the later 1930s.

British branch Under the leadership of the former British diplomat Reginald Bridgeman, the British branch of the League against Imperialism published a few anti-colonial tracts and held some meetings and conferences. Since anti-colonial protests in Britain and France at that time were frequently associated with communism and the Comintern, organisations such as the League against Imperialism and the Ligue were often the target of political action to curb communist activities. The Ligue eventually lost momentum in the thirties.

Pan-Africanism and Communism Apart from blacks from French Black Africa, there was much interest in communism on the part of Pan-Africanists. Both Pan-Africanism and communism were opposed to colonialism and imperialism and this gave them a certain common ground. The communists, though not particularly interested in Pan-Africanism, nevertheless saw possibilities in the movement for the furtherance of world revolution, and the instigation of colonial revolution certainly enjoyed a prominent place in the tactics of the Comintern. The communist *Negro Worker*, edited for a time by George Padmore of Trinidad, was, except for Marcus Garvey's *Negro World*, the only organ that provided news coverage to serve the Pan-African and the communist world.

Dwindling influence With the rise of Hitler, communist interest in Africa declined and when the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations and the Popular Front governments, the League against Imperialism disappeared from the scene. After 1936 a more accommodating attitude towards communism developed in France and there was an increase in the number of blacks from the federal blocs who became members of the French Communist and Socialist parties. French communists were also more readily appointed to posts in French West Africa. In this manner the communists were able to extend their influence and black Africans gradually came to realise that they had friends who shared their aspirations. African leaders, however, preferred socialism to communism, while the Pan-Africanists only flirted with communism for a short time. They realised that it

would harm their cause since it exposed them to the heavy anti-communist pressure of the colonial masters. Also, many Pan-African leaders had a Christian missionary education which made them critical towards the atheistic views embraced by communism. Nevertheless, the blacks learned new techniques from the communists, and these could be put to good use against colonialism. As an anti-colonial influence, a stimulus for nationalism and a training ground for political leaders who emerged after the Second World War, the influence of communism cannot be underestimated.

Pan-Africanism

Catalyst Pan-Africanism has been characterised as the catalyst of anti-colonialism and the most important reason for the decolonisation of Africa after the Second World War. This movement created a cultural upheaval among the blacks, and this eventually changed into political action.⁹ As we have seen, Pan-Africanism originated among the blacks of the New World, especially the United States, but was also influenced by the West Indian Islands and Brazil. Religious and educational influences mingled with political and cultural ideals and actions, and these became fertile ground for the growth of nationalism on the African continent.¹⁰

Aggrey American blacks shared a common experience of discrimination and suffering with their brethren in Africa and looked for a way to resolve the situation. Some, like Booker T. Washington, favoured a gradual evolvement: a process in which blacks were to make the most of what whites could offer them by improving their capacity for modern industry and agriculture. Among the African admirers of this view was James Kwegyir Aggrey, a native of the Gold Coast. He had studied at Livingstone College in North Carolina, the chief educational institution of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. In the United States, Aggrey came into direct contact with the living conditions of that country's Negroes before he joined the Phelps-Stokes Fund's Commission on African Education in 1920. In this capacity, Aggrey was instrumental in introducing numerous changes in British educational policy in Africa. He made wide contacts in Africa and strongly encouraged cooperation between black and white. Shortly before his death in 1927 he was elected vice-principal of Achimota College in the Gold Coast, where Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah studied.

Du Bois Aggrey's calls for moderation and self-improvement counted far less than his personal stature, and W. E. B. du Bois challenged Aggrey's cautious approach. Supported by other black scholars, they wanted to assert their right to full citizenship and stressed the importance of solidarity between blacks throughout the world. Du Bois was an Afro-American of mixed origin who studied sociology in Germany and at Harvard University in the United States. He attended the first Pan-African Conference held in London in 1900 and returned to the United States where he became one of the main figures in the foundation of the National Association for the Advancement of the Coloured People (NAACP). When Henry Sylvester Williams died in 1911, Du Bois became the chief inspiration of the Pan-African idea.

As editor of the NAACP's newspaper, *The Crisis*, Du Bois made Africa a subsidiary activity of the organisation. He wrote a great deal on educational affairs and was a prominent protester against the exploitation of coloured people. His intention of forming a world body to protect the rights of these people was prevented by the outbreak of the First World War. In 1919 the NAACP sent him to Paris to investigate complaints about discrimination and maltreatment of Negro soldiers. He also represented African interests at the peace talks and covered their proceedings for *The Crisis*.

**Paris
Con-
gress**

He met Blaise Diagne at the peace talks in Paris, but was unsuccessful in attempts to obtain some action on the protection of coloured people. Failing in this, Du Bois enlisted Diagne's aid and hurriedly organised a Pan-African Congress attended by a number of blacks from the New World but only two from Africa: the Liberian president, C. D. B. King, and Sol Plaatje from South Africa. The congress reflected Du Bois's ideas clearly. International laws were requested for the protection of blacks while matters such as a request to hold land in trust for blacks, the ending of slavery and exploitation, the scrapping of the death penalty for certain offences, and the provision of proper educational facilities were directed specifically at the colonial powers. Du Bois orientated the Pan-African movement towards self-determination for the Africans, but he saw this as a distant aim – a more immediate goal was a measure of participation in the governing process – and this view received some support from white observers at Paris. Du Bois felt that this aim could be attained as soon as their level of development allowed the blacks to do so. The process could start with the retention of their traditional forms of government. Du Bois hoped to elevate the dignity of Africans and Afro-Americans through leadership training, research projects, congresses and appeals to the colonial powers.

**Calls
for co-
lonial
reform**

The second congress, held in London, Brussels and Paris in 1921, drew more delegates from Africa and in a 'Declaration to the World' colonial reform was urged. Delegates demanded racial equality and repeated their request for black participation in government. Another congress held in London during 1923 called for the development of Africa for the benefit of the Africans and asked for representation on the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. Du Bois personally took these and other resolutions to the League's headquarters in Geneva. These congresses, and the one held in New York in 1927, were hardly more successful in drawing African involvement than the previous ones. The delegates were mainly Afro-Americans and West Indians, and Blaise Diagne was virtually the only French West African who established any links with the movement Du Bois had started. Other French interest came mainly from Guadeloupe and Martinique. Diagne left the movement in 1921 and the French West Indian element followed his example in 1923.

Many years would elapse before the Africans cooperated more strongly with the Pan-African movement. In the French case the opportunities presented by the policy of assimilation – the aspiration to rise to influential positions in France itself – made many African intellectuals remain aloof from supporting movements that propagated the severance of ties with the mother country. These people gave little support to the political aspects of Pan-Africanism but devoted attention to its cultural and literary

aspects. By 1927, when Du Bois's attempts to hold a conference on African soil failed, his movement had lost momentum, and during the depression years in the early thirties it came to a virtual standstill.

Garvey The radical Jamaican Marcus Aurelius Garvey was a great champion of the Pan-African movement in the inter-war years. Garvey was a racially pure Negro, largely self-schooled, who came into prominence from about 1916 onwards. Radical, militant and charismatic, he had little patience with Du Bois's ideas and was committed to giving the blacks a sense of dignity and pride. He travelled widely in the West Indian Islands, South and Central America and Britain, and used his newspaper, *The Negro World*, to make strong pleas for the revival of the black man. He rejected the religion of the whites and put forward the idea of a black Christ and Madonna. In 1914 Garvey formed the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the African Communities League. Both organisations grew rapidly and by 1923 they had branches in the Gold Coast, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, while his ideas echoed across the entire continent.

Garveyism His activities soon converted his name into an 'ism' and Garveyism became associated with political activism, showmanship and sheer vanity. This is amply illustrated by his address to 25 000 of his followers at Madison Square Garden (New York) on 2 August 1920. Clad in vivid green, purple and gold academic regalia, Garvey opened his speech by reading a telegram he had sent to Eamon de Valera, president of the Republic of Ireland. In the name of 25 000 Negro delegates, representing 400 million Negroes, he declared his wish that Ireland be free for the Irish as Africa should be free for the Negroes. In this way he connected the old 'Irish Question' and struggle for freedom with the newer African one, a move that could hardly go unnoticed in the American press.¹¹ The year 1920 saw a series of conventions and the establishment of a Negro empire in New York with Garvey himself as 'Provisional President of Africa'.

Liberia Garvey was a strong exponent of the back-to-Africa movement, and for this purpose he established a shipping company, the Black Star Line, and coined the slogan 'Africa for the Africans'. At the same time he began to look for an operational base in Africa from which he could conduct his battle against colonialism and colonial trade – he finally decided on Liberia. Returning Afro-Americans could settle there and make the country the core of a future United States of Africa. While Garvey trained but did not arm military personnel for this struggle, an emissary went to Liberia in 1920 to explain the aims of the UNIA and to transfer its headquarters there. Liberia was promised financial aid and the liquidation of her debts in exchange for the construction of schools and hospitals and permission to settle Afro-Americans – who could then help with the development of agricultural and natural resources. The Liberian government accepted Garvey's ideas enthusiastically and made land available for the settlement of emigrants in the following two years. It is possible that influences from the United States (or even Du Bois, who called Garvey 'an impudent demagogue'¹²) spoke out against Garvey's kind of emigration when he represented the United States at the inauguration of the Liberian president in 1923. There was also some pressure from the neighbouring French and British colonial governments. Whatever the cause, when Garvey's representatives

arrived in Liberia in 1924 they were deported and shortly afterwards the UNIA was banned. This put an end to Garvey's emigration scheme to Liberia.¹³

End of UNIA Garvey and Du Bois were opposites, not only in temperament but also in their aims and methods, and they frequently attacked one another. After 1925 Garvey's movement declined rapidly and as a result of a money order fraud in 1927, he was deported from the United States. This put an end to his African liberation programme. By 1930 the UNIA had collapsed and in 1940 Garvey died in London.

Influence of Garvey's ideas The significance of Garvey's work lies in the fact that he was the first person to mobilise the Afro-American masses and to give them a sense of self-awareness by teaching them pride in their origin. His work enjoyed wide interest in Africa and held a certain fascination for young intellectuals on the continent as well as for African students at American Negro colleges and universities.¹⁴ Men such as Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah were strongly influenced by Garvey, and this gave his ideas a new lease of life when Africans took control of Pan-Africanism in a much more favourable climate after the Second World War.

Growing African consciousness From 1916, when Garveyism began to grow, an African consciousness was reflected in education in the introduction of research projects and courses on Africa at the Afro-American University College of Howard. This happened a few years before European and white universities in the United States became interested in similar studies. By 1927 Azikiwe, assisted by George Padmore from Trinidad, started a black study group at Howard College. It remained small in the years before the Second World War but the enthusiasm of its members was unbounded – as can be seen in the formation of the International African Service Bureau, the International African Friends of Abyssinia and the Ethiopia Research Council: organisations which were established as a result of black indignation at Mussolini's conquest of Ethiopia and what they regarded as an inadequate European response to this aggression. After his arrival in the United States, Kwame Nkrumah was drawn into the Pan-African Federation: a body that enjoyed support among black students and youth organisations. It signalled the start of a revolution in the Pan-African movement, for henceforth the leadership shifted to people who eventually guided it into the realm of practical politics after the Second World War.

The beginnings of Négritude

English-speaking Afro-Americans played the major role in the development of the political aspect of Pan-Africanism and proto-nationalist and nationalist movements in British West Africa. In French West Africa this was limited in scope and influence, since the intellectual elites there were preoccupied with absorbing French culture in accordance with the policy of assimilation. Paris was the main source of action. A number of West Africans and Algerians made contact in the French capital. They despised Blaise Diagne as a colonial puppet and regarded civilisation as a farce, claiming that this was proved in the trenches on the Western Front. Some invoked France's revolutionary and republican tradition in order to demand full integration or full political autonomy.

There was some contact with Garvey and an abortive effort was made to liberate Dahomey.

Négritude The main contribution of French-speaking Africans to Pan-Africanism was, however, in the cultural and philosophical spheres. The assertion of a distinct African personality was a significant component of the movement that eventually became known as Négritude and which clearly reflected the views held by Edward Blyden. The most important supporters of the idea of Négritude were a group of intellectuals who gathered in Paris. In protest against colonialism, they attempted to trace their origin, history and culture. They founded a journal, *La Race Nègre*, which criticised Western civilisation and industrialisation. Their thoughts were echoed by black Americans, among them the Haitian poet Jean Price-Mars.

Jean Price-Mars A self-educated folklorist, Price-Mars made an ethnographic study of Haitian folklore in order to inspire and arouse appreciation for their own culture among the island's population. Like Garvey he tried to create a sense of racial pride. But Price-Mars's influence was limited in Haiti. It was greater in the French-speaking world among people who felt alienated from their traditional culture and rejected their modern environment

Nardal During the 1930s Paulette Nardal, a black from Martinique, ran a salon in Paris for black intellectuals and brought together black authors and students of black culture, including Maurice Delafosse, Leo Frobenius, Melville Herskovits and Dieter Westermann.

Césaire Aimé Césaire, a poet from Martinique, and Léopold Sédar Senghor, who participated vigorously in the 'Negro renaissance', a movement that implied contact between American black culture and Africans, were also members of the salon. This group published many small magazines during the 1930s, and these limited issues were feverishly read before they ceased publication. *La Revue du Monde Noir* was the first and devoted space to Pan-Africanism and racial harmony. Subsequently *Légitime Défense* was published and covered the political sphere. By 1934 Senghor and Césaire had become the most important leaders of the Négritude movement and founded their own journal, *L'Étudiant Noir*, in which they developed the concept of Négritude.

Creed of Négritude Négritude was the cult of being black, more specifically 'blackness', and its supporters rejected modern civilisation, emphasising everything that was African, including the glorification of the African landscape. It was only in 1939, however, that Césaire created the word 'Négritude' in a poem he wrote on the eve of his return to his native Martinique. The mixed feelings that stirred through his mind and heart created sentiments of nostalgia and bitterness in the anguish he felt for fellow blacks in modern Western society.¹⁵ The emotion expressed by the poem was very similar to European nationalistic and romantic work dating from the French Revolution, with its glorification of the qualities of the poor, the downtrodden and the primitive. This gave an ethical significance to the real or supposed characteristics of peasants and proletarians. Such a romantic creed appealed to intellectuals who were most strongly exposed to French cultural assimilation and directed the French West African struggle against imperialism to the literary and philosophical plane. This distinguished it from the views held by

English-speaking Pan-Africanists.¹⁶ For the Negro, the root of his problem was his contact with the whites and the causes of this conflict lay, first, in the slave trade which transported him to a foreign world and, second, in his antipathy towards the later partition of Africa.

Léopold Senghor

Senghor, who had a white wife, was the outstanding apostle of Négritude from Africa. By the time he completed his education in Dakar and Paris, he was fluent in French and German, and was strongly influenced by German romance. He wrote a master's degree on Baudelaire and became the first qualified black to teach in France. In 1929 a fellow student and later French president, Georges Pompidou, introduced him to the philosophy of Maurice Barres, a conservative French nationalist, who glorified the value of ethnic customs and rural life in contrast with the impersonality of urban life. This influenced Senghor profoundly and sparked a reaction against the cultural demands of the French capital. He turned to the work of white Africanists and began to regard the policy of assimilation as a personal affront since the French failed to recognise that black Frenchmen could still be African. For this reason Senghor and his friends asserted the distinctive value of black culture. As Senghor saw it, Négritude was the direct result of the policy of assimilation and he warned that, despite a Western upbringing, a black man would have to retain his spirit of Négritude or collective soul, the quality or essence of the black personality as it became known in the British colonies. To Senghor, Négritude meant the whole complex system of civilised values on cultural, economic, social and political levels in the Negro world – a consciousness that, he felt, should be promoted actively. He rejected skin colour as a criterion for culture and blamed Western imperialism for the destruction of Africa's traditional cultural patterns. But it was as a Frenchman that Senghor discovered his roots and it was in French poetry that he portrayed his deepest feelings. In 1939 he joined the army and was captured by the Germans. After the Second World War he began to play an important role in French politics and the subsequent decolonisation of French West Africa.

NATIONALISM IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Nationalism less intense

Although the influence of Communism and especially Pan-Africanism stimulated movements with a pan-continental aim in sub-Saharan Africa, nationalism in this region was less intense than in North Africa among the Arabs. As in the rest of the colonial world it drew its essence not from a mass proletarian character, but from the social and political aspirations and the upward mobility of certain individuals, and in the decade after the First World War this class was consolidated.¹⁷ In British West Africa their nationalist activities were hampered by inherent divisions among themselves and by an inability to make contact with the illiterate masses who enjoyed the benefits indirect rule offered them and supported the traditional chiefs in the tribal regions of the interior.¹⁸

Hayford

Pan-Africanist ideas found their most responsive audience among the westernised elite of British West Africa. Joseph Casely Hayford, a member of a prominent Gold Coast family, was educated in law at Cambridge and London and had an interest in anticolonial affairs before the First World War. He played a leading role in nationalist activities

and wrote about the virtues of traditional life and the influence colonialism had brought to bear on this way of life. In 1915 he began to think in terms of a union of the British West African colonies and he established the National Congress of British West Africa five years later in Accra. It was a movement of students and intellectuals and aimed at promoting cooperation between the four English-speaking regions as a prelude to union. Between 1920 and 1929 the organisation held four congresses which discussed common problems and kept contact with both Du Bois and Garvey.

National Congress of British West Africa

The National Congress of British West Africa was not a militant body, but it dominated politics during the 1920s. Its specific significance for nationalism lay in its programme, which was aimed at obtaining a voice for Africans in the government within the constitutional framework that existed in the colonies – something that coincided strongly with the demand Du Bois propagated in his Pan-African congresses. The congress demanded that half of the elected members on the legislative councils should be Africans, and that these elected blacks should have control of the tax system; they also wanted power to appoint and dismiss chiefs and demanded steps to eliminate racial discrimination in the civil service. Other requests were that towns be granted local self-government, that curbs be placed on the immigration of Lebanese and Syrians (whose commercial activities were to the disadvantage of the blacks), and that West Africa should have its own university.

Decline

The British government regarded the National Congress's demands as representative of a small minority without the support of the masses, and the constitutional reforms introduced in the early twenties disconcerted it.¹⁹ The National Congress owed much to its founder, Casely Hayford, who served on the Gold Coast Legislative Council, and after his death in 1930 the congress went into decline. Its significance lay in its loyalty to the British Crown, its preference for membership of the British Empire and its contact with the leaders of the Pan-African movement which kept the ideal alive when its fortunes began to wane in the late 1920s.

Wasu

The West African Students Union (Wasu), founded in London in 1924 by the Nigerian Ladipo Solanke, was not only closely related to the National Congress but also had strong links with the Pan-Africanists. Solanke also strove to create a United States of West Africa as preliminary to an eventual united continent. Wasu's more immediate aims were to provide students of African descent with a hostel in London, to act as an information bureau and research centre, to foster national consciousness and a spirit of pride among African peoples, and to nurture leaders who would be able to work in a self-reliant and coordinated fashion in order to serve Africa and the African. Wasu had branches in West Africa which also made money available to serve the Union's ideals. It outlived the National Congress and during the 1930s its hostel became the gathering point for black students from all over the world. Soon this became a centre for the exchange of views about colonialism and the position of the African. Garvey supported the centre and indeed paid it a visit, and Wasu became the torchbearer of Pan-African ideals when the latter came under pressure in the thirties. Wasu expressed the official views of the protest movement against the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, and it gave active support to the International African Service Bureau, which transformed itself

into the Pan-African Federation. After the outbreak of the Second World War, Wasu's requests for self-government in the British colonies increased and it expressed its displeasure at the fact that the Atlantic Charter was silent about West Africa. Wasu also demanded the right to self-determination for colonial peoples and was still active in 1945, by which time the British government had gradually grown to recognise it as a mouthpiece for African nationalism.

Herbert Macauley The political activities of the elite in British West Africa did not include the formation of political parties in the modern sense of the word. Nigeria was the exception. Many leaders in that colony were West Indians, and they brought the ideas of Du Bois and Garvey to the colony. Among them was Herbert Macauley, who established the Nigerian National Democratic Party in 1923. Because he had been convicted of forgery and criminal libel, he could not serve on the Legislative Council but his party held all of the seats on the council until 1938. It outmanoeuvred its political opponent, the People's Union, but had limited success since it was too exclusive and Lagos-oriented²⁰ and many influential Nigerians supported the colonial government. Like Casely Hayford, Macauley was part of a generation which was fast disappearing and in the 1930s a younger generation of leaders emerged, inspired by different ideals.

Nnamdi Azikiwe Among them was Nnamdi Azikiwe, popularly known as Zik. He was invited to the United States by James Aggrey and enrolled at a black preparatory school in West Virginia in 1925. A few years later he attended Howard University and Lincoln University. Azikiwe associated himself with Garvey, Du Bois and George Padmore. In 1934 he returned to Africa, but not to his native Nigeria, where he had failed to obtain employment. He settled in the Gold Coast before he entered Nigerian politics in 1937. He became a journalist and propagated a more radical nationalism in his newspaper, *The West African Pilot*. This earned him the support of the Nigerian Youth Movement, which developed from the Nigerian Youth League in 1934. It endeavoured to attain a share in the government and to negotiate improved educational facilities from the authorities. With Zik's support the Nigerian Youth Movement captured all the seats in the Legislative Council in 1938, soundly defeating Macauley's National Party. In 1937 Dr J. B. Danquah formed the Gold Coast Youth Conference, a similar body, in the neighbouring colony. Although these organisations failed to realise their aims before the outbreak of the Second World War, they certainly laid the foundation upon which post-war leaders could build their anticolonial campaigns.

Senegal and Blaise Diagne The educated elite in French West Africa responded rather differently to colonialism. Assimilation was very slow and, with the exception of the Senegalese communes, there were just over 2 000 black French citizens in a total population of 15 000 000 in 1936.²¹ Senegal was unique in West Africa in the sense that its General Council, in which the peoples of the interior were represented, had a black majority and, after the First World War, a black president. This was the result of Blaise Diagne's efforts during the war and although he was at times critical of the Senegalese government, he won the elections in 1919–1920 and controlled the four communes. The French were unhappy about this development. They censored the press and took strong secret police measures against nationalism. Diagne continued to represent Senegal in Paris, and until his death in 1934

he served as deputy minister of the colonies in the Laval government. In these years Diagne became more moderate and felt that much more could be achieved by cooperating with the French than by opposing them. He broke his ties with the Pan-Africanists and lost many friends, but his views had a moderating influence upon the Africans. His successors followed the same path, and until the Vichy regime scrapped the Senegalese constitution in 1940, they remained loyal supporters of French policy.

Stimulant for nationalism

A more radical approach towards colonialism was gaining ground in French black Africa, however, and a growing consciousness of the positive values of African culture took root in direct opposition to the French preference for assimilation. This was the result of the views of Léopold Senghor and his West Indian friend Aime Césaire, but until the outbreak of the Second World War this approach was not universally accepted. After the war it became an important stimulant for nationalism in French Black Africa.

Portuguese colonies

In the Portuguese colonies assimilation had a contrary effect. The limited freedom that emerged in Portugal during the republican period disappeared after 1926, and during the 1930s Antonio de Salazar restored the close centralisation that had existed between the mother country and its colonies before the 1920s. This implied a departure from the process of assimilation into Portuguese culture and lifestyle – something which the Portuguese saw as their colonial responsibility. The relative freedom that the assimilados in Angola and Mozambique enjoyed was curtailed by increased steps against their political activities – including the deportation of their leaders – which made it easier for expatriates to operate from Lisbon.

This was the situation even before the authoritarian Estado Novo came into being. Organisations were set up in the Portuguese capital which had contact with the Pan-African ideas of both Du Bois and Garvey. Pan-Africanism, however, enjoyed minimal support in the Portuguese colonies, because the Pan-Africanist organisations in the colonies had little contact with or support from the urban and rural masses, despite their concern. The Liga Angolana succumbed under official pressure, and reorganised itself in 1929 into the much more moderate Liga Nacional. Gremio Africano also revived in the late 1920s and merged with the Liga Nacional in 1931. In Portuguese eyes these organisations were nationalistic, and police action against them forced them to subdue their activities because most of their members were coloured Roman Catholic civil servants who could lose their jobs in Luanda. This did not prevent them from presenting the government with wide-ranging demands in 1938. These included representation on the governor's advisory council which, like the council in Mozambique, consisted of ten members, five officials and five nominated non-officials who had to be Portuguese citizens.

Mozambique

Political activity among the literate mestiços in Mozambique was less sophisticated. In this colony early resistance came mainly from harbour workers, who made frequent use of strikes, especially between 1918 and 1921 and in the following two decades. The Associação Africana sought guarantees of black land rights, an end to discriminatory labour practices, and the introduction of radical political and economic reforms. When government pressure bent the association to its will, the radicals broke away and

formed the *Institutio Negrophilo* which carried out its political programme under cover of social, cultural and sporting activities. This group's strongest weapon was its newspaper, *O'Brado Africano* (The African Voice), established in 1918. It spoke out against the system of forced labour or *chibalo*, the poor working conditions of the free African labourer, the preferential treatment whites received, and the lack of proper educational facilities. In 1932 it told the authorities that 'we no longer want to suffer the bottomless pit of your excellent colonial administration ... we have the scalpel ready'.²² Press censorship followed, closing this outlet for anti-colonial protest, leaving only the mordant songs of the peasants as a means of expressing their frustrations at the dictatorial colonial regime – a regime which left the Portuguese in the mother country just as unrepresented as their colonial brethren.

Kenya Protest against colonial rule was not limited to the more sophisticated educated elite who had been inspired by Western education, nor was it restricted to those who were exposed to anti-colonial influences such as communism and Pan-Africanism. In Uganda, tribal divisions hampered the growth of national political endeavour, but Kenyan blacks who had been involved in the First World War developed self-awareness and realised that organised resistance could exploit the weak links in the armour of the colonial master. This attitude grew slowly after the war and was stimulated by the alienation of land to resettle ex-soldiers, a harsh labour policy, unemployment, increased taxes, and the government's failure to honour its war-time promises to black servicemen.

Kikuyu Association Land and labour policy was at the core of the dissatisfaction and inspired blacks to form organisations to protect their interests. These were not really political parties, but rather pressure and welfare groups which tried to make the government aware of their grievances. The first of these was the Kikuyu Association, established in 1920 by a group of headmen, but the close association that indirect rule fostered between headmen and the government prevented this body from gaining much support. A year later the Young Kikuyu Organisation came into being. It was formed by young members of that tribe in order to protest against a proposal from the farmers that wages should be decreased to offset the lower prices received for their products on world markets. Its leader, Harry Thuku lost no time in speaking out against racial legislation in Kenya and he made contact with disenchanted Indian leaders who were challenging the whites for representation on the legislative council.

Harry Thuku The organisation later changed its name to the East Africa Association to conceal its Kikuyu roots, but Thuku's radical views were anathema to the British government and he was deported in 1922. His activities and the danger inherent in Thuku's movement – on one occasion while he was in prison the police had to fire on his followers – convinced Archdeacon W. E. Owen of the Church Missionary Society to revive the Young Kavirondo Association formed in 1921, as the Kavirondo Taxpayers and Welfare Association. It cooperated with the Kikuyu Central Association, the successor to Thuku's organisation, and tried to negotiate a better deal for the blacks. They continued along these lines for a number of years. The land question continued to be one of the most contentious and was at the core of the protest movement. After Thuku had

returned to Kenya in 1931, Jomo Kenyatta was sent to Britain to lend weight to black land claims. Personal ambitions and differences in local circumstances prevented the growth of real unity among the blacks. Tribally oriented groups that reflected the awakening of a political consciousness among particular tribes, the significance of specific grievances (such as fear of Asiatic commercial domination), land matters, and the necessity of unity against the whites, were among the matters which motivated these organisations.

**Chris-
tian
mission-
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Another form of black protest was the establishment of separatist and millenarian churches, which usually broke with the traditional mission church for some reason or other. The Chilembwe rebellion early in 1915 vividly illustrates the influence of the Bible on the liberation of Africa from colonial rule. Christian missions played an important role in the growth of nationalism in sub-Saharan Africa, since it was their religious and educational work which introduced many Africans to the new world they entered after the partition of Africa. In many instances the missionaries were the first African nationalists.²³ Christian missionaries were a revolutionary force in colonial Africa; their appeal to the outcasts and the hopeless gave inspiration and new hope and broke the traditional views of a fatalistic acceptance of one's lot. Missionaries also reduced the fear of magic and superstition but, on the negative side, the demand for total conversion presented a serious challenge to indigenous life and even those Africans who were enthusiastic about the new faith preferred to maintain some traditional beliefs and practices.²⁴

**Separa-
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chur-
ches**

By 1892 missionary influence had stimulated the formation of separatist churches, with these messianic movements trying to stabilise the social and economic disruption colonialism had brought. A wide variety of such churches developed, and they formed one of the few platforms available to blacks for the expression of their opposition to colonial rule. Between the First World War and the 1930s these churches grew in number and size and became the schools where nationalist leadership was nurtured – a smokescreen for politics. This is vividly seen in the circumstances surrounding the Chilembwe rebellion early in 1915 when the American-educated leader of a separatist church attacked the recruitment of Africans for the European war effort. Although Chilembwe's ultimate goal is somewhat uncertain,²⁵ his teachings were strongly millenarian, and his abortive rebellion against the British government foreshadowed the dramatic growth of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (Jehovah's Witnesses) in the decades after the First World War.

**The
Watch
Tower**

Elliott Kamwana, a migrant Tonga worker from northern Malawi, returned to his native land in 1908 after Joseph Booth had converted him to this sect. Within a few months Kamwana baptised about 9 000 adherents. The faith he brought to his fellow tribesmen embraced the evolving elite as well as the masses, since it not only denounced existing church and state systems, but proclaimed exciting alternatives. Kamwana predicted that a new order of divinely sanctioned African states would come into being by 1914. His success is clearly illustrated by the fact that the Tonga and their neighbours had been served by Scottish missionaries before Kamwana's arrival, but he soon aroused such enthusiasm that many thousands demanded baptism. The Scottish missionaries

were dubious about the sincerity of these demands and preferred strict probation and a wider education before baptism. Kamwana himself was not granted baptism by the missionaries. The Watch Tower offered an immediate alternative open to all. In this way the Watch Tower gained many adherents and its influence spread into the Copperbelt and northern Zambia. The message was also passed on via domestic servants, eventually reaching the Shona of Zimbabwe. The Kitawala movement was an offshoot of the Watch Tower, and during the First World War its millenarian preachers in Zambia predicted the imminent end of the world and the end of colonialism.

Haven for blacks With the economic deprivation that Central Africa was suffering during the late 1920s, the millennial doctrine of the Watch Tower served as a haven for blacks. According to its colourful and imaginative preaching, American blacks would arrive in aeroplanes to rescue Africans and all the whites would show remorse for their deeds. The doctrine continued to propagate the idea that the Africans had to prepare themselves for the Second Coming. Self-purification, the eradication of witchcraft, and the use of spiritual healing were used to good effect in spreading the influence of the sect. The teachings also undermined the authority of the traditional chiefs – they could not offer their subjects a viable alternative to heal the disruption caused by colonialism. Separate villages of Watch Tower followers were set up in Zambia, and in the mid-1930s the Watch Tower's impact was radical.²⁶ The colonial authorities were perturbed at the role it played in the strike on the Zambian Copperbelt in 1935.

William Harris The only separatist church in French Africa was founded by William Wade Harris, a Methodist-educated prophet from Las Palmas in Liberia. He received his calling in a Liberian gaol and, on his release in 1912, he discarded European clothing and commenced with a preaching mission in the Ivory Coast and western Gold Coast: baptising, healing, destroying fetishes and preaching a simple moral life. Harris was essentially religiously oriented and gave preference to self-improvement on a European pattern. Between 1913 and 1915 he made more than a 100 000 converts before the French, distrusting his Protestant and Anglophile influence, deported him. Some of his converts formed independent churches, and others joined mission churches. By 1918 his followers numbered 150 000.

Simon Kimbangu The impact of Simon Kimbangu's preaching in Central Africa was even greater. Although he received his calling as early as 1915, Kimbangu did not preach before 1921. Soon afterwards he was seen as a mythical and divine hero, a black messiah. In 1921 he declared that he had been sent by God and, according to one source, he claimed to be the son of God.²⁷ At this stage, opposition to Belgian rule had subsided, yet there was a great deal of tension in black societies. This tension was not only evident between the recognised chieftaincies and the colonial authorities, but was visible among those who benefited from the colonial economy and those who did not. There was also a general fear among blacks about the power of witchcraft. Under these circumstances Kimbangu's preaching thrived. He was subsequently arrested because Belgian officials and Roman Catholic missionaries saw his message as one of revolution. This allegation was unfounded – he was not a revolutionary. It was his followers who gave the movement an anti-European and revolutionary character: they encouraged the people not to pay

taxes, to withhold their labour, not to plant their crops, and to keep their children out of missionary schools. The Belgian king commuted the death penalty Kimbangu had received to life imprisonment, but this only made Kimbangu a martyr figure (resistance movements thrive on the martyrdom of their leaders). Until the outbreak of the Second World War Kimbangu's followers established churches in the northwestern and northeastern parts of the colony and hoped that his return would bring an end to white rule. Kimbanguism spread into the French Congo and despite the deportation of three of his disciples to Chad, the movement persisted.

ARAB RESISTANCE TO COLONIALISM

- Islam** Western colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa created circumstances that favoured the expansion of Islam. When inter-ethnic strife and warfare came to an end, this religion expanded rapidly in western and eastern Africa. Growth in Central, Equatorial and southern Africa was slower.²⁸ The strongest Islamic opposition to Western colonialism occurred in North Africa where the Islamic religion had been established among the Arab population long before the arrival of European colonialism. The jihad or holy war against the Christians was regarded as the only acceptable way to confront foreign influences. In many instances it was an attempt to maintain or re-establish the state that existed earlier, and between the two world wars this effort continued. In contrast to the position in sub-Saharan Africa, resistance in the Arab and Muslim parts of North Africa enjoyed mass support, which made it a formidable force against Western colonialism.
- Egypt** Egypt was a leading influence in this respect. When Turkey joined the Central Powers soon after the outbreak of the First World War, British troops occupied the Suez Canal zone and London contemplated its annexation. Deep-seated objections prevented this step, and in December 1914 Egypt was proclaimed a protectorate. As a result of the Turkish threat, Anglo-Egyptian cooperation initially was good and the country budgeted for a surplus. The British were able to restrict any attacks to regions east of the Suez Canal. Allied reverses at Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia sparked a number of Muslim uprisings.
- Growing nationalism** At the end of the war the British still believed that they could occupy Egypt for a long time, since constitutional development there would evolve very slowly. There was even talk of the establishment of a British-Arabian empire similar to the British Indian Empire.²⁹ This contrasted sharply with even the most moderate expectations by Egyptian leaders in 1917. They hoped for the complete lifting of British control or at least its confinement to financial and foreign affairs, the judiciary and defence. President Wilson's Fourteen Points and the British recognition that parts of Mesopotamia and Syria were ready for self-government seemed to confirm Egyptian hopes. On 13 November 1918, two days after the fighting in Europe came to an end, a delegation from the nationalist group the Wafd asked the British High Commissioner, Sir Reginald Wingate, to restore independence and requested permission to lay their case before the government in London. This was refused and it was made clear that the British regarded Egyptian affairs as solely their concern – at the Paris Peace Conference no discussion could take place on matters concerning Egypt. Saad Zaghlul, the leader of the Wafd,

turned to mass demonstrations. This resulted in a chain reaction, because the subsequent deportation of Zaghlul sparked further demonstration and violence which began among students in Cairo and filtered through to the fellahin or peasants.

Impasse When Lord Allenby replaced Wingate as High Commissioner at the end of March 1919, the position was almost under control. Allenby attempted to resolve the impasse. He brought Zaghlul back to Egypt and allowed the Wafd to attend the peace conference in Paris. This was welcomed by Egyptian nationalists who wanted to bring the Egyptian question before an international body, but they received a cool reception at Paris where the United States recognised the British protectorate over Egypt. This made the Egyptians even more determined to fight for independence while the British, with the support of its allies, chose to keep Egypt as a protectorate and to introduce some kind of status in which relations between itself and Egypt would be fixed by an agreement. Lord Milner therefore led a delegation to Egypt not only to investigate the reasons for the disorder, but also to report on a constitution which would assure protectorate status and guarantee peace and progress.

Limited independence The Wafd boycotted the Milner Commission and disorder, strikes and attacks on individuals flared up again. Egypt stood firmly behind the Wafd, its position bolstered by offers of financial assistance from Lenin, the Soviet leader.³⁰ Two and a half years of abortive negotiations followed in which it became abundantly clear that no agreement would be possible without the support of the Wafd, despite a British declaration that Britain was willing to forgo the protectorate. Zaghlul was deported a second time before Allenby became impatient and threatened London with his resignation in an effort to force the British government to some action. Before the new crisis ran its course, Britain issued a unilateral declaration of independence and the protectorate was scrapped. Independence of a kind took its place. Four matters were reserved for further negotiations: the security of the empire's communications in Egypt, defence, the protection of foreigners and minorities, and the question of the Sudan.

Triangular struggle Zaghlul returned in 1924 as the country's prime minister. Parliamentary government had failed, however, because traditional practices in that country were ignored. The position was aggravated when King Fuad tried to obtain absolute power. The continued presence of British garrisons and naval bases in the canal zone fed the Wafd's wrath. Its most bitter attacks were reserved for the British as it continued to demand full and unconditional independence. While Britain was willing to relax her control in 1922, it was no longer willing to do so after 1924. Increasing involvement in the affairs of Palestine, Trans-Jordan and Iraq made Egypt more important to Britain³¹ and it was unwilling to relinquish the hold that the restrictions of 1922 gave it. A three-way struggle involving the Wafd, the king and Britain dominated Egyptian politics until 1936.

Semi-dictatorship The Wafdists and King Fuad continued to demand full autonomy until 1930, while developments in the Sudan also hampered progress. Tired of Wafd domination in parliament, Fuad prorogued that body in 1928 and personally took charge of negotiations with the Labour government in Britain. This culminated in an agreement in 1930

in terms of which Egypt could join the League of Nations and conduct its own diplomacy. It also signed a defence pact with Britain. The Sudan however remained the stumbling block that convinced the Wafd to reject the agreement. With British approval Fuad dissolved parliament. After a manipulated election in which the Wafd was defeated, Fuad ruled for three years as a semi-dictator. As the Wafd's attention was completely absorbed by the independence issue, it neglected economic development and began to lose its hold on the Egyptians. Allegiance was transferred to extraparliamentary groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, established in 1928, the Young Egyptians (1933) and the paramilitary Greenshirts. The Greenshirts were strongly fascist and found a ready hearing among the young and socially underprivileged. Also the Fascist presence in neighbouring Tripolitania and Ethiopia changed the position in the eastern Mediterranean. The Egyptians realised that they were totally defenceless against these ominous new forces and this opened the way to a compromise solution of the Egyptian question.

Anglo-Egyptian agreement

Fuad realised that the Wafd's support was necessary before he could improve relations with the British. To accomplish this he requested the restoration of the constitution of 1923. Although Britain was sceptical of this, it undertook not to interfere with internal affairs in Egypt. After another parliamentary election, Fuad revived the constitution and organised all of the parties into a national front with the aim of settling differences with Britain amicably. In 1936 an Anglo-Egyptian agreement was signed which replaced the unilateral declaration on independence of 1922. The new arrangement provided for a termination of the military occupation after twenty years, although Britain had the continued use of Alexandria and Port Said as naval bases and Egyptian air space was open to the British air force. In return for these privileges Britain undertook to protect Egypt against foreign aggression, although Egypt could conduct its own diplomacy. Egypt joined the League of Nations in 1937 and recognised the condominium over the Sudan.

Sudanese nationalism

From the beginning Egyptian nationalists had been opposed to the condominium, particularly since Egypt was responsible for Sudanese finances. In the Sudan itself, the older generation welcomed the British presence since it helped to free them from the Egyptian yoke. The younger generation, educated under the British government, saw Egyptian nationalism as an inspiration, although it did not have a clear idea of the future relationship between the two countries.³² The first stirrings of Sudanese nationalism began in the early 1920s and in 1924 the White Flag League was founded. This organisation initially worked for a separate Sudanese independence but later changed to favour a reunification with Egypt. In June 1924 disturbances occurred in Khartoum and Omdurman, and these spilled over into Egypt when the Sudanese governor-general, Sir Lee Stack, was murdered in Cairo by seven armed men disguised as students. This incident had serious implications for Anglo-Egyptian relations and resulted in large-scale suppression of Sudanese nationalism.

Allenby demanded an apology from the Egyptians and the punishment of the guilty. He banned all public demonstrations and replaced all Egyptian military and civil personnel with British and Sudanese office-bearers. The British government endorsed

this. Egypt's appeal to the League of Nations evoked the response that the matter was an internal one which fell beyond its jurisdiction and the Egyptians were forced to submit to these demands, although some Sudanese battalions continued to oppose the Egyptian surrender. They received no support from the Egyptians themselves, and the British were able to restore order. Egyptian influence was fast disappearing from the Sudan and the former Egyptian colony took another step towards its own independence from Egypt.

The Maghrib In the Maghrib, in the first decade after the First World War, the French were confronted with many problems. It was a multiracial area and the population belonged to widely different cultures and religions. In due course the French appreciated that the Islamic population was totally opposed to any form of assimilation while the colons, for their part, rejected it too. In Algeria the colons opposed Clemenceau's plans to extend French citizenship to the Algerians who served the French cause during the war.³³ The stimulation of Arab nationalism during the war and the influx of Pan-Islamic ideas from Turkey heightened existing tension as nationalists in Algeria and Tunisia waited for some form of compensation for their defence of the 'fatherland'. The easy access the Maghrib had to both East and West was another stimulant to resistance against colonialism. Those who could study in France came into contact with socialism, communism and other anti-colonial philosophies. Others attended Muslim universities in Syria and Egypt and absorbed new ideas from these sources; all of them brought new perspectives back to the Maghrib.

Young Tunisians The Young Algerian and Young Tunisian movements were formed in expectation of major concessions. The Young Tunisians wanted to follow the Egyptian example; they preferred a revision of the protectorate conditions and made an unsuccessful bid to obtain a hearing at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. When this failed they reformed the Destour Party. The name Destour simply means constitutional party and it was derived from a constitution proclaimed in 1857 by the bey which guaranteed fundamental rights and equality before the law. Under the banner of this party, the Pan-Islamic Movement agitated for separation of Tunisia from France, and in 1922 the French government tried to conciliate the nationalists by offering them representation in economic institutions such as local and national trading councils. In the following year French citizenship was offered to all Tunisians who qualified for it, but the stipulation that they live under French, and not Islamic law, was accepted only by a few and it antagonised Muslim religious leaders. When a leftist government took control in Paris in 1924 the Destour renewed its attempt at reform but the metropolitan government accused it of collaborating with communist and trade union activities. Despite continued demonstrations and boycotts the Destour – which was much weaker than the Egyptian Wafd – accomplished nothing and by the end of the decade had lost some of its initial support. This included the support of Habib Bourguiba, who had joined the party after his return to Tunisia in 1927.

Habib Bourguiba Educated in Paris, Bourguiba was completely assimilated. He loved France but hated colonialism. After his return Bourguiba became editor of *La Voix du Tunisien*, the Destour's mouthpiece, and did much to renovate party organisation. Bourguiba

preferred to fight colonialism by peaceful means, but became disenchanted with the stagnation in the Destour for, apart of protesting against colonialism, they achieved nothing. He started his own newspaper, *L'Action Tunisienne*, in 1932, but maintained an association with Islamic sentiments by campaigning against the burial of naturalised Muslims in Muslim cemeteries, thus forcing them to bury in separate graveyards. His newspaper was banned and when unrest spilt over to the country because of poor harvests in 1934, Bourguiba broke away from the Destour and formed the Neo Destour Party. The new party retained its Islamic character but opposed traditionalism and religious fanaticism. It made use of communist organisational methods and created cells to organise the country and spread education. It also revived the 1920 demands for constitutional reform.

Continued unrest and demonstrations provoked French measures against his movement; Bourguiba was arrested and all public meetings were banned. When Léon Blum's Popular Front government came to power in 1936, it relaxed these stern measures and Bourguiba was invited to Paris to negotiate the eventual independence of Tunisia. However, colon influence in Paris prevented Blum from doing so. In 1937 Sheikh Thaalbi, a founder of the Destour, returned to the country and his Islamic nationalism and moderation had a stabilising effect on the more radical Neo Destour. Quarrels between the nationalists weakened their position and erupted into further violence a year later. Bourguiba's party was banned and Taalbi and his old colleagues tried to direct Tunisian nationalism. Nationalist agitation subsided after renewed Italian claims to the territory. Tunisians preferred French rule to Italian, and when Prime Minister Edouard Daladier visited the colony on the eve of the Second World War, Tunisians realised the advantages of the French presence and rallied to the side of the mother country.

**Young
Alge-
rians**

The Young Algerians did not do much better. They were assimilated to such an extent that their leader, Ferhat Abbas, once declared that there was no such thing as an Algerian people.³⁴ Since the masses were Muslims, Abbas's attitude did not win him any friends when controversy ranged about Muslim rights. A demand for the naturalisation of all Muslims despite their Islamic connections in essence meant equal treatment for Muslims without loss of their Islamic identity. This had a detrimental effect, since it barred the way to further concessions and sparked greater hostility against the French than the concerted efforts of the Young Algerians and French Socialists to advance the cause of assimilation.

**Messali
Hadj**

Those espousing a specific Algerian identity rejected assimilation, but did not cause the French much harm either. One such movement was the *Étoile Nord-Africaine*, which was established among expatriate Algerian workers in Paris and came under the control of Messali Hadj in about 1927–1928. Hadj was a communist and had close affiliations with other influential communists. In those years the idea of political independence grew steadily and was supported by the new French Communist Party and the Communist International, which saw Algeria as an area suitable for liberation. While the centenary of the French presence in Algeria was celebrated with great pomp in the early thirties and France claimed that the colony was completely assimilated,

Messali Hadj incited workers to revolt. This led to his arrest. After his release he returned to Algeria at a time when his nationalistic precedence began to exceed his communist leanings. Since the French disbanded his Étoile Nord-Africaine, Hadj became leader of the Algerian Peoples' Party before he was arrested a second time. His party was banned with the outbreak of the Second World War.

Salafiyya Among religiously inspired anti-colonial movements, the Salafiyya was significant. It supported the Islamic religion and the Arab language as signs of an Algerian people culturally and politically independent of France. In its preference for independence it associated closely with the views of the French Communists. In 1931 it formed the Society of the Ulema, which stimulated nationalistic pride and tried to draw the youth into the movement through the educational system. Like Hadj's party the Ulema rejected cooperation with the French.

The Violette Bill As part of the centenary year the French government contemplated the Maurice Violette Bill, which suggested that selected Muslims of good French culture could vote with the Europeans, instead of with the Muslim electorate, for separate representatives. This was opposed and the Ulema pushed for Islamic reform to purify the faith from the influence of French culture. Like all Maghribians, the Algerians were hard hit by the depression, and attacks on officials and tax-gatherers occurred. Violence and political agitation increased, and by 1934 the colons demanded action from the government in Paris. This threatened the Violette resolutions, which ran into strong opposition in the French Senate. Like the Tunisians, the Algerians expected much from the Popular Front government of Léon Blum. With the exception of Hadj, all Algerian parties decided on combined action and an Islamic Congress, dominated by the Young Algerians and the Ulema, put a number of demands to the government. The upshot was the Blum-Violette Bill, which envisaged wide-ranging reforms. It proposed that some Algerians would receive full citizenship and that between 20 000 and 30 000 of them (including former officers of the French army, graduates and senior officials) would receive the vote without it being necessary to forswear their Muslim status or the jurisdiction of the Koran. The influence of the colons and a major public campaign against it prevented the bill from going through and seriously undermined the Algerians' faith in metropolitan France. Ferhat Abbas made a complete *volte-face* and established a new party, the Union Populaire Algérien, and began to speak in terms of an Algerian future, language, customs and traditions.

Morocco In nearby Morocco, which was brought firmly under French control by the efforts of Hubert Lyautey, France became involved in the Rif War in Spanish Morocco in 1921. This resulted in Lyautey's resignation, and while his successor, Philippe Pétain, struggled to bring the rebels and the western and southern parts of the country under control, new opponents to French rule emerged among the young Moroccans. This was the logical outcome of the direct rule that Lyautey's successors had introduced and it coincided with renewed attempts to purify Islam. The Moroccan League was formed in 1927 and, apart from the pursuance of religious purification, the Rabat group of the organisation stressed the need for progressive democracy. In May 1930 the French issued the Berber Decree. It was their last attempt to label the Berbers a separate group,

with a different relationship to the French and the Arabs. The young nationalists saw this as an attempt to divide the Moroccans, and agitation against it spread from the mosques to the masses. At the same time, their campaign gained an international dimension when Chekib Arslan, an Arab nationalist living in Geneva, supported it. Agitation reached the streets of Morocco's major cities and led to the foundation of the Reform Party which, like the Destour in Tunisia, favoured constitutional reform within the framework of the protectorate.

L'Action Marocaine In 1932 the Reform Party was rechristened and became known as L'Action Nationale or L'Action Marocaine. It openly celebrated the anniversary of the sultan's accession and welcomed him in Fez in 1934 with strong anti-French demonstrations. This was followed by a suggestion to the French to act like true protectors and to lead the Moroccans to responsible self-government in the spirit of the Treaty of Fez. But the members of L'Action Marocaine experienced much the same treatment from France as their counterparts in the other Maghribian territories. After their newspaper was banned in 1934, widespread agitation followed, supported by leftist groups such as the Socialists. In May the Comité d'Action Marocaine laid a detailed reform plan before the government. It aimed at reforming the conditions that were attached to the protectorate. It also wanted educational facilities to be improved. Moroccan nationalists hoped to negotiate with the Blum government on much the same terms as the Tunisians, while developments in nearby Spanish Morocco stimulated high hopes among the nationalists. Spain favoured Moroccan independence as a means of countering French influence, and when General Francisco Franco's rebellion in Spain began, he promised the Moroccans full autonomy, and gave them freedom of speech and the right to form their own schools. Radio broadcasts urged Moroccans in the French protectorate to ask for the same rights, but the campaign soon developed into a vehicle for Italian and German propaganda. As in the other parts of the Maghrib, the Violette Bill caused serious disunity in nationalistic ranks, and they failed to obtain what they wanted. Unrest broke out in 1937, but the French firmly crushed it. The Comité, who did not enjoy mass support, was disbanded, and by 1939 the League had been weakened by clashes over leadership and organisation and had crumbled. Morocco's struggle for independence would be seriously resumed only in 1943.

Spanish Morocco In Spanish Morocco (a section of Morocco dominated by the Rif Mountains) a serious and violent reaction, which interrupted progress in the region, was sparked when the Spanish moved to occupy the territory. They made heavy work of pacifying the Berbers in the region and when the resistance, led by Abd al Krim, broke out in 1921 the Spaniards controlled only one third of the protectorate. After the Spaniards had been driven back to the coastal towns, a Rif Republic was proclaimed with Abd al Krim as president. There was a plan to create a new dynasty, and a modernising element wanted to unite all the Rif tribes. This involved the Rif tribes in the French part of the protectorate in the struggle and the Rif War extended to the French part of Morocco in 1925. When the Rifians closed in on Fez, the French began to question Lyautey's strategy and he resigned. Under his successor, Philippe Pétain, half a million French and Spanish troops were poured into the region but no official aid or recognition was given to Abd

al Krim. He was regarded merely as a tribal leader and the republic he proclaimed was not taken seriously by the international community. Pétain aimed the French offensive against Abd al Krim's headquarters and his surrender in 1926 signified the collapse of the confederation he had created four years earlier. The Rif began to cooperate with the Europeans and even produced an army of Moroccans for the Spanish Civil War.

Libya In Libya the Italians struggled until 1932 to re-establish the ground they had lost during the First World War. After its entry into that war Italy withdrew to the coastal area of Libya, while Turkey incited groups inside Cyrenaica and Tripolitania to take up arms against the Italians and to invade Egypt. Consequently the Sanussi, under Ahman al-Sharif, who did not feel at liberty to ignore the sultan's wishes, rose in November 1915. Troops from the British Empire, including a South African brigade, suppressed the rebellion in 1916 whereupon the British managed to create good relations with al-Sharif's cousin and successor, Idris. This enabled them to neutralise Sanussi opposition, which forced the Turks and the Germans to leave the territory and made an agreement possible between the Italians and the Sanussi. The agreement lost its force when peace was restored, but the Italians were too weak to reconquer that part of Libya from which they withdrew during the war.

Tripolitania A group of Tripolitanian and Pan-Islamic nobles, assisted by an Egyptian nationalist, wrung a Fundamental Law for Tripolitania, followed by one for Cyrenaica, from an exhausted Italy in 1919. These provided for a council and an elected assembly to assist the Italian governors. No agreement was reached with the Italians or among the Tripolitanian leaders themselves on the ultimate status of the territory, consequently it was impossible to introduce the new constitution.

Cyrenaica In Cyrenaica Idris did better, since he was willing to compromise and the Italians were willing to act in good faith. He accepted a definition of his power, honours and subsidies for himself and his family, and undertook to evacuate all military camps and to disband the political organisation he had created outside his area of jurisdiction. Any sheik would be removed if the Italians believed he influenced relations detrimentally. Idris's followers were unwilling to accept these conditions, which placed him between two irreconcilable worlds. He escaped by going into exile in Egypt.

Guerrilla warfare After the restoration of political stability in Italy, following the Fascist coup in 1922, a more vigorous policy towards Libya was set in motion with the aim of bringing the whole area, including the Fezzan, under control. The Italians had some initial success, and in 1923 they drove the partisans from the coast. The original objective of the conquest came to the fore again, which was the creation of an economic and international Italian asset in North Africa. Persistent mutual disagreements harmed the resistance movement while continued bombing dispersed the partisans. In 1923 guerrilla warfare began when the sixty-year-old Umar al-Mukhtar returned from Cairo. Each Bedouin tribe formed its own guerrilla band, but there was a general coordinated strategy and the enemy was attacked from different points as frequently as possible. It was impossible for the Italians to distinguish between guerrillas and ordinary members of a tribe, so ultimately they could not trust anyone. The Italians ruled by day and the

resisters by night, so the only way to crush the enemy was to destroy the whole community, and after 1930 this became the policy of general Rodolfo Graziani, the Italian commander. Italy's fortunes began to change when Graziani began to place the Cyrenaican tribes in well-guarded camps and built a 300-km-long barbed-wire fence along the Egyptian frontier in order to cut off the flow of supplies from that country and neutralise the support the guerrillas received from the local population. Thus deprived, the guerrillas suffered a final blow when Umar al-Muhktar was captured on 11 September 1931 and was executed five days later. In January the struggle came to an end.

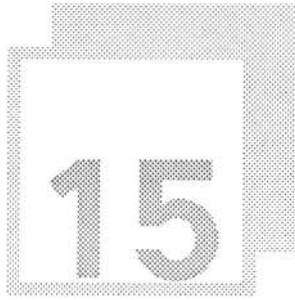
No significant successes

As was the case in sub-Saharan Africa, resistance in North Africa between the two world wars could not score significant successes in the sense that the colonial yoke was thrown off. Political awareness and nationalism were awakened, however, and the Second World War created the conditions for nationalism to blossom. After this confrontation, which created a completely new world order, independence was there for the taking.

Notes

- 1 K. R. Minoque, *Nationalism*, p. 88.
- 2 W. Hailey, *An African survey*, p. 251.
- 3 T. Hodgkin, *Nationalism in colonial Africa*, p. 23.
- 4 J. S. Coleman, *Nigeria: A background to nationalism*, p. 425.
- 5 H. Kohn, *Nationalism: Its meaning and background*, pp. 9–10.
- 6 H. Grimal, *Decolonization: The British, French, Dutch and Belgian empires, 1919–1963*, pp. 43–45.
- 7 B. O. Oloruntimehin, 'African politics and nationalism 1919–35', in A. A. Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. VII, *Africa under colonial domination. 1880–1935*, p. 572.
- 8 F. Claudin, *The Communist movement from Comintern to Cominform*, p. 244.
- 9 A. P. J. van Rensburg, *Moderne Afrika*, p. 52.
- 10 R. D. Ralston, 'Africa and the new world', in A. A. Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. VII, pp. 752–780.
- 11 R. F. Betts, *Uncertain dimensions: Western overseas empires in the twentieth century*, p. 147.
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Africa and the Second World War

'Scramble from Africa'

When the Second World War broke out, the European colonial powers were firmly in control of their possessions on the African continent. Within their empires, the inter-war years saw no evidence of collapse of European colonialism in the near future. When the Second World War came to an end the political emancipation of Africa (as in the rest of the colonial world) set in at such a pace that reference to a scramble from Africa is not inappropriate. World War II acted as a catalyst for the demise of Western colonialism all over the world. In Africa the war signified change, the extent of which was determined by the continent's involvement in a struggle which made new demands on Africa's people and its colonial governments.

AFRICA'S MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

African soldiers

As in the First World War, France made heavy demands on African soldiers, and by June 1940 about 9 per cent of the French army fighting against the Germans were blacks, recruited to a large extent from French Equatorial Africa.¹ Actual hostilities spilled over to the continent when Italy, who had prepared herself for war in Africa, joined Germany in May 1940. Large forces (Italy had 100 000 men in Libya and Ethiopia) were a threat to adjoining territories such as Tunisia, Egypt, the Sudan and Kenya. Initially, too, there was some doubt about the attitude of General Francisco Franco of Spain, who sympathised with the Axis powers and who could easily have seized Gibraltar. The air force, a

new element in warfare, was a serious menace to Mediterranean shipping routes and Egypt, the historical link in the lifeline between Britain, India and the Far East, came under threat.

Vichy regime After France fell in June 1940, Britain's position deteriorated because French North Africa, the French West African Federation, Somaliland and Madagascar opted for the Vichy regime, and this regime's intentions concerning the provision of naval facilities for the Germans in the Mediterranean were still unclear. After the withdrawal of these regions from the war, it became of the utmost importance to Britain that the French fleet in key ports such as Bizerta and Casablanca should not fall into German hands. After Anglo-French discussions the French disarmed most of these ships, but those in Oran in Algeria were destroyed to prevent them from falling into German hands.

Italian North Africa campaign On land the Italians moved from Libya to attack the northern parts of Egypt while Spain occupied the international zone of Tangier and gave the Germans the opportunity of making a strong bid to establish their influence there. Franco made his active participation in the struggle conditional on receiving Gibraltar, French Morocco, parts of Algeria and extensions to existing Spanish territories. As these claims were unrealistic because of Spain's limited power, Hitler let negotiations with Franco drag on until the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa late in 1942 when the realisation of these aims became impossible.²

Eboué and the Free French Some Frenchmen were unwilling to accept the German invasion of their country and joined up with Chad, the only part of the French empire in Africa which did not opt for the Vichy regime. The governor of Chad, the Guyanese-born Felix Eboué, had already made contact with the British in Nigeria when General Charles de Gaulle, who had gone to Britain during the German invasion of his country, began to work towards the regrouping of French forces in Africa. Eboué and many officers in the colonial army responded eagerly, and during August 1940 they consolidated De Gaulle's position in French Equatorial Africa and Cameroon. Eboué was appointed governor-general of this federal bloc. This region and the Belgian Congo, which was cut off from Belgium after Germany occupied the mother country, became the base for the Free French's continued struggle. Although they failed to take Dakar from its Vichy rulers in September 1940, the Germans were kept out of West Africa. French Equatorial Africa also played a vital role in Allied air and land links between Accra and Lagos and the Sudan and Egypt – an important asset in the long drawn-out war in the Libyan desert.

North Africa After these successes, North Africa became the main centre of the war in Africa as the British advanced against the Italians in Libya. Fortunes fluctuated because Italian setbacks forced the Germans to come to the rescue of their ally, first with air support and later with the deployment of highly trained panzer divisions under General Erwin Rommel in 1941. After this the Italians and Germans were almost able to occupy Egypt, since the loss of Crete and the bombardment of Malta severely handicapped the British; the Suez Canal was open to air attack. But Rommel was also experiencing difficulties with his supply routes and eventually withdrew to Tripoli to avoid being surrounded.³

- Changing pattern** By 1941 the general pattern of the war was beginning to change because of the extension of hostilities to Russia and, later in the same year, the entry of Japan and the United States into the conflict. In 1942 it appeared to the Allies that the Axis powers were aiming at a giant pincer movement through southern Russia and the Caucasus to the Middle East. Moreover, Japan was menacing the whole Indian Ocean area.
- Importance of Cape route** For the Allies the strategic importance of the Suez route diminished considerably after convoys to Egypt, the Persian Gulf, India and the Malay Peninsula were sent around the Cape. The revised Allied strategy placed greater importance on harbours such as Freetown, Cape Town, Simonstown, Durban, Mombasa and Aden. This resulted in the expansion of air routes, notably from the United States via Brazil to Ascension Island, Accra or Leopoldville, or across Central Africa from Takoradi or Accra to Cairo or Fort Lamy to Khartoum. Another alternative was from South Africa to the Sudan and Egypt.
- Capture of Madagascar** In May 1942 the British, supported by South Africa, captured Madagascar from the Vichy regime to prevent it falling into Japanese hands and to add to the control of these air routes. The island became part of a widespread but sustained naval war around the African coast from Freetown to the Mozambique channel which was waged by submarines and raiders on the one side and by sea and naval patrols on the other. Despite the loss of many ships, the flow of Allied traffic was not vitally affected.
- German surrender** The position in North Africa remained unchanged until the historic tank battle of El Alamein that began in October 1942 and in which the Allies outnumbered the Axis forces two to one. Rommel began a 2 000-km retreat towards Tripoli while an Anglo-American expedition landed at Oran on 8 November. The Free French crossed the Sahara, taking control of Algeria and joining up with the Anglo-Americans from Morocco. Rommel realised that he was standing in the way of an Allied attack on Europe, with the Americans advancing from the west and the British from the east. He hoped to neutralise both these forces with reinforcements from Italy. Rommel managed to defeat the Americans but failed against the British under Bernhard Montgomery. The German surrender followed on 12 May 1943, shortly after the Allied forces had combined. The war caused enormous damage in Libyan cities as well as in Tunisia, which was under German administration for a while and which was the main battlefield before hostilities ended. With the Mediterranean sea route opened once again, North Africa became the base for attacks on Sicily and southern Italy.
- Allied influence in North Africa** When the 'Anglo-Saxons' (as Vichy propaganda named the Allies⁴) entered North Africa, West Africa reconsidered its position and joined the Free French while De Gaulle also governed North Africa, largely as a client of the Americans. This included the Fezzan, in former Italian Libya, which linked North Africa with Equatorial Africa. The coastal region of Libya came under British administration. Britain had certain claims to territories it had conquered from the Italians and whose return to Italy or any hostile power might have threatened its communications. The hostility of the United States towards the expansion of the British empire prevented this claim. German propaganda between the two world wars demanded the return of Germany's colonial empire. After Hitler's rise to power, the fear existed that the Nazis would attempt to regain the lost territories despite Hitler's definite preoccupation with eastern Europe – a possibility

that was dispelled by Germany's defeat. The war also signified Italy's disappearance from the continent, although it was allowed to return to Italian Somaliland after the war under the strict proviso that the colony be prepared for independence within ten years.

African conscription Hostilities in Africa did not reach the same intensity as in Europe or Russia, but in other respects Africans were more directly influenced than they had been in the First World War. Many African cities were used as bases for troops and equipment and improved arms made them much more vulnerable to attack than before. Recruitment was intense and their strong aversion to Hitler's racial theories made black leaders feel far more sympathetic towards the Allies. British Africa remained loyal, and about 146 000 blacks from West Africa and 228 000 from East Africa saw service not only in Africa, but also in theatres in the Far East. These numbers were supplemented by De Gaulle's Free French as well as by Africans from the Belgian Congo. A total of some two million blacks eventually took part in the war. On the side of the Axis Powers, Italy recruited large numbers of the indigenous inhabitants of Northeast Africa.

THE ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

Manpower Human resources in Africa also had economic significance. They produced the food and other products needed to feed troops and civilians in Europe. After Japan had conquered the British and Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia, Africa became the Allies' only source of palm oil while the demand for rubber, tin and sisal also increased. The bigger demand for these products did not stimulate higher prices, however, since various forms of coercion were used to obtain labour and enforce conscription. For example, nomads were forced to sell their cattle. The increased demand for agriculture placed greater demands on manpower which clashed with those of the military – who picked the most able men to the detriment of the agricultural sector. Inflation was another form of compulsion. There was strict control on imports, which led to price increases. These were not compensated for by a rise in the prices of exports, however, because exports were subject to restrictions. Companies from the mother countries bought cash crops at low prices and sold their goods at much higher prices. This meant that farmers had to produce more in order to buy imported goods.

Strategic involvement Allied military setbacks in the Far East increased Africa's strategic importance, stimulating urban development on the continent. Freetown's deep-water port, the harbours of Dakar, Monrovia, Accra, Lagos, Port Harcourt and inland towns such as Fort Lamy and Kano became staging posts in a link between the Sudan, Egypt and the North African battlefields. The East African ports of Mombasa, Dar es Salaam and, after the defeat of the Vichy regime on Madagascar, Diego Suarez, expanded as a result of the campaigns in the Far East. There was a large-scale influx of rural people; Leopoldville's population grew from 40 000 in 1939 to 110 000 six years later, and between 1935 and 1945 that of Dakar rose from 53 000 to 132 000. The workers, who were employed in the construction of harbours and airports and toiled in the factories, lived in poor conditions in these growing cities. Conditions were exacerbated by poor harvests in North Africa between 1942 and 1945. In the growing cities, unskilled and semi-skilled labourers came into contact with a Western lifestyle. Tribal ties were weakened as they

realised that they could work for wages and organise their own lives. These labourers formed the masses, the working class upon which the nationalists could base their post-war claims – a force that had been lacking before this war.

Industrial development

Although the war was a strong stimulant to the continent's economic potential, there were sectors of the economy which showed little change from pre-war conditions. The colonial governments retained money obtained from the difference between the purchase price of goods and the price fetched on the world market, and used these reserves to finance the war effort. In this way a precedent was created, because the colonial governments maintained this mechanism after the end of the war, using the funds for development projects that often had no relevance to the farming community. On the other hand, the manufacturing industry benefited. Prior to the outbreak of the war, mineral and agricultural processing was usually done in Europe, but during the conflict a large number of factories where local products could be processed were built in Africa's emerging cities. These formed the basis of the new industrial development on the continent.

Political awareness

The expanding colonial economy created opportunities for many ambitious Africans to become businessmen in their own right. This process was aided by the enlistment of many Europeans for war service and the employment of Africans in the expatriate companies. A new bourgeois class developed which joined the ranks of the nationalists and provided funds for the new political movements which grew in the wake of political reforms introduced by Britain and France, for example, after the war. A new political awareness was emerging, encouraged by improved mass communication and the Western education that had been introduced in the inter-war period. Africans were drawn into the mainstream of international politics and had a much clearer comprehension of the essence of the struggle – as had been the case during the First World War. The Second World War enhanced their political aspirations, introducing new and bigger demands. The demand for a share in government gave way to the escalating demand for complete independence.

WORLD WAR II AND THE COLONIAL POWERS

Dwindling prestige

The psychological impact of early military setbacks shattered the image and stature of European colonial powers in the eyes of the Africans. France and Belgium crumbled before the German onslaught, and for a time their independent existence was based in their African colonies. Britain alone succeeded in retaining its territorial integrity but, in its efforts to do so, its economic and military dependence upon its African colonies grew. The success of Japan, an Asiatic power, in the Far East is of specific significance in this respect. The fall of Singapore, the great British imperial bastion in that region, indicated the 'essential hollowness of colonial power'⁵ and after Japan's conquest of Malaya, Britain became even more dependent on its empire. In India this did not go unnoticed,⁶ and in return for their cooperation during the war Indians were promised independent dominion status when hostilities ceased.

Preservation of colonial empires European invincibility became a myth which subsequent military successes later in the war did nothing to change. This view also permeated the thoughts of the Africans, with the possible exception of those in the Portuguese and Spanish colonies where for a time the inhabitants remained isolated from the new views that emerged.⁷ British Africans were promised social, economic and political reforms and the Free French followed suit, visualising bold economic, social, legal and political reform when they discussed the future of France and its African colonies at Brazzaville in 1944. The Belgians, too, had reform in mind but political change was not on their agenda. These undertakings, however, did not imply decolonisation. Churchill made it clear that he did not become prime minister in order to liquidate the British empire, although the Conservative Party was divided on the issue.⁸ The Free French thought in terms of wider political freedom within the framework of a bigger France. The preservation of their colonial empires formed a bond between Churchill and De Gaulle.⁹ In De Gaulle's eyes, the continued existence of the empire was a guarantee of French status as a world power. But in these attitudes there was a distinct difference. The British accepted the inevitability of decolonisation in the future – the French did not.

Roosevelt and the four freedoms Politically conscious people in Africa had the support of a powerful anticolonial lobby outside their continent. The United States was undoubtedly the major influence in this respect. As early as the 1930s President F. D. Roosevelt demonstrated his willingness to come to terms with Latin America, where the United States had developed a strong colonial influence since the days of the New Imperialism. In 1934 he promised independence to the Philippines, where the Americans also had a colonial stake. United States policy was determined by two principles: free trade or free and equal opportunity, and the recognition of the principle of equality between all countries. On 6 January 1941 Roosevelt proclaimed his four freedoms in the American Congress: freedom of speech and belief, and freedom of want and fear. This formed the foundation of American war propaganda and was a bid to commit the reluctant Americans to the war.

The Atlantic Charter Before the United States became directly involved in the war, Roosevelt defined his position more fully in the Atlantic Charter of 14 August 1941, which was meant to give the war some relevance in American eyes. He wanted to stop the signing of secret treaties similar to those concluded during the First World War since this would remove 'any fears that the cynical old world would simply use the United States to fight in order to preserve the status quo'.¹⁰ Churchill meanwhile used the opportunity provided by the Atlantic Charter discussions to seek the participation of the United States in a postwar international organisation.¹¹ The charter that emerged from these discussions formed the basis for joint operations and post-war objectives which members of the Western alliance were asked to sign after the United States joined hostilities. One of the principles was the recognition of the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they preferred to live. This implied the restoration of sovereignty and self-determination to all who wanted it. The hopes and expectations aroused in Africa by the Atlantic Charter compelled Churchill to explain in the British parliament that same year that the Atlantic Charter referred to people conquered by the Nazis. He

stressed that this was entirely different and separate from the question of self-government for British possessions in Africa.

American objectives

Roosevelt, on the other hand, wanted to make the charter applicable to all people, and organisations such as the Phelps-Stokes Fund of New York City initiated programmes for the economic, social and political advancement of colonial communities. After the United States entered the war, Roosevelt became more positive in defining American objectives in his political propaganda, making it clear that 'one thing we are sure we are not fighting for ... is to hold the British Empire together'.¹² In 1942, Wendell Wilkie on a visit to London spoke of the necessity to eliminate imperialism. This annoyed the British; they suspected that the Americans, who denied that Hawaii, the Philippines and Puerto Rico constituted an empire, were actually trying to gain access to British colonial markets. This view was not altogether unfounded since Roosevelt hoped that by encouraging the colonial people to throw in their lot with the Allies, he could gain favourable economic opportunities for the United States in a post-war world in which free trade and free opportunities would reign supreme.¹³

The British believed, incorrectly, that Roosevelt's anti-colonial attacks were launched at them alone. Roosevelt, who held the French in low esteem because they had collaborated with the Germans in Europe and allowed the Japanese the use of airfields in Indo-China, was outraged by French colonialism. He also distrusted De Gaulle, whose failure to capture Dakar in September 1940 tarnished his image in the eyes of the American president.¹⁴ In public Roosevelt assured the French that their colonies would be returned to them. This was in order to encourage resistance against the Germans, but in private Roosevelt wanted to place French colonies under international trusteeship. De Gaulle was aware of Roosevelt's attitude and regarded it merely as a veil for American expansionism.¹⁵

Trusteeship

In 1943 the United States took the idea of trusteeship a step further. During the Moscow talks between the foreign ministers of the Big Three, the American foreign minister, Cordell Hull, confronted his colleagues with a memorandum that was not on the agenda. It dealt with the administration of colonial areas and called for an Allied declaration on the preparation of these territories for self-government. It suggested that dates be fixed for their independence at the earliest possible time and that the colonial masters should follow commercial policies that would serve the interests not only of the colonies but of the world at large. This was clearly aimed at the British and although British leftist politicians, including Clement Attlee, favoured a similar policy, the American step was tactless because it could have put the alliance under stress.¹⁶ In the same year Roosevelt gave his support to the notion that dependent territories should be given independence as soon as they were considered ready for it by the United Nations, a loose organisation of 26 states that came into being on New Year's Day 1942 and which declared its adherence to the principles of the Atlantic Charter.

Soviet anti-colonialism

Soviet criticism of colonialism caused much less immediate concern than American. In the inter-war years the Soviet Union championed anti-colonialism as part of its worldwide proletarian revolution – a campaign that was aimed primarily at Asia. It gave the

Soviets tremendous prestige among colonial communities everywhere, because it seemed that the Soviets had not only solved their own colonial problems but had developed from a position of utter backwardness in 1917 into a world power. Soviet anti-colonialism was based on the principles of self-determination and equality and therefore found support among nationalists in Africa. The British in West Africa kept a wary eye on I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson, a communist in Sierra Leone, but the French were more tolerant, allowing communist study groups into parts of Free France in Africa. In the interests of Allied unity, the Soviets adopted a cautious attitude to anti-colonialism while Stalin showed surprisingly little interest in Africa during the war. But Moscow certainly had colonial aspirations. Either Russia was strong enough to prevent anti-colonialism within its borders, or managed to hide this from its Allies, who were perhaps too weak to intervene in Soviet domestic affairs.¹⁷ At the Moscow meeting, where Hull confronted Eden and Molotov with the colonial question, Molotov 'cautiously and tactfully' referred the matter for further consideration – after all, Eden may have suggested that the Latvians, Estonians, Tartars or Kazakhs were in a position similar to that of the Africans.¹⁸ Subsequent to 1947, when the break between East and West hardened into the Cold War, anti-colonialism became a political weapon and the Soviets encouraged colonial communities to demand freedom and independence from their colonial masters.

Colonial development

This kind of anti-colonial thinking did not meet with general approval either in Britain or in France. British official circles feared that the Americans might make the liquidation of the empire a condition for continued military and financial support, or else apply some pressure to prepare the colonies for independence under some kind of international vigilance. To appease the Americans, the British embarked upon a more liberal colonial policy which Arthur Creech-Jones (who became colonial secretary in Attlee's Labour government of 1945) visualised as constructive trusteeship leading to partnership within the Commonwealth. It included social and economic reform which linked up with the Colonial Welfare and Development Acts of 1929 and 1940. In 1929 an annual sum of money was made available in the form of loans and grants to the whole dependent empire, but its main concern was the home economy because it did not aim at making the colonies self-supporting. The 1940 Act brought a definite change. It was based on the pre-war situation and the result of discussions before the outbreak of hostilities in 1939. Eventually the exigencies of the war against the Nazis and criticism from Britain's enemies brought about a change of heart. This Act buried the doctrine of self-sufficiency and replaced it with development. Development now became the watchword, and £10 million was set aside for this purpose. In 1945 this amount was increased to £240 million over a period of ten years. This was implemented in a series of five- and ten-year plans which saw the construction of roads, hospitals and universities as well as the introduction of housing and economic development schemes.¹⁹

Fides

France introduced the Fonds d'Investissement et de Développement Économique et Social (Fides). This was certainly the outcome of both the war and American pressure. It took French efforts to start a public works programme in 1931 a step further, because the money made available became a grant instead of a loan. At the Brazzaville Con-

ference of 1944, where the grant was introduced, its objective was defined as the development of the productive potential of the empire: the growth of wealth as well as the improvement of the living conditions of the indigenous inhabitants. The Belgians, too, wished to improve the image of their empire and embarked on an ambitious development programme with a strong welfare content but no political potential – an aspect that both the British and the French wanted to accommodate in some form.

THE QUESTION OF INTERNATIONAL TRUSTEESHIP

International supervision During the war there were widespread calls for colonial empires to be placed under some kind of international supervision, and a debate followed in which the type of international administration used in Tangier was suggested. This view enjoyed the support of Australia, New Zealand, the Indian nationalists and the Soviet Union. The Americans favoured international trusteeship, and at the Teheran conference Roosevelt and Stalin were especially critical of the French. They agreed that Indo-China could not be restored to France after its liberation from the Japanese. Both leaders expressed the view that since the Japanese had introduced a semblance of self-government in the regions they had conquered, the Allies should continue this process and the trusteeship principle was seen as a feasible way to move towards independence.²⁰ It was felt that, at the very least, the territories liberated by the Americans should come under this type of dispensation.

Doubts After Teheran, Roosevelt did not pursue the idea. Neither Churchill nor De Gaulle supported it, and although Stalin showed vague interest during 1944, he was cautious not to annoy Churchill on this issue in the months preceding the Yalta Conference. During 1944 the United States also began to alter its view. The changing position in the Far East compelled the United States to occupy certain islands previously held by Japan, and the trusteeship principle lost some of its attraction. Churchill also stated bluntly at Yalta that he would not accept any form of intervention in the British empire. After Stalin had left the conference, Roosevelt and Churchill finally accepted that future trusteeship would remain the responsibility of the colonial powers, as was the case under the mandate system. Another shift in emphasis came after Roosevelt's death on 12 April 1945, when the rift between the United States and the Soviet Union became increasingly apparent. This in no way checked or altered the momentum of the anti-colonial movement and the trusteeship idea eventually became part of the charter of the United Nations, which provided for the establishment of an international system of trusteeship.

Dramatic change All this formed part of the dramatic change in the perspectives on colonialism that were heralded by the Second World War. The new responsibility felt by the colonial powers towards their possessions was not immediately apparent, and they wanted to be their own trustees. All three powers made a concerted effort to renew their colonial mission, sending technical experts and personnel from the mother countries to the colonies to launch new projects which were also aimed at the revival of the metropolitan economies.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE AFRICANS

- De-
mands
for re-
form** In contrast to the colonial powers, the educated elite in Africa saw the Second World War as an opportunity of obtaining compensation for their loyalty and support during the struggle. In North Africa those who demanded reform wanted advancement within a parliamentary framework. After the Germans released him from gaol, Habib Bourguiba told his followers in May 1943 that France would not forget her real friends after the defeat of the Nazis.²¹ South of the Sahara, where independence was not an immediate aim or prospect, British and French reforms were often ahead of the expectations of the elite. These reforms were soon regarded as inadequate, especially since a new generation of nationalist leaders emerged and made greater demands on the metropolitan powers. Constitutional reforms had to be hastened otherwise the colonial government had to turn to repression.
- Growth
of na-
tional-
ism** African nationalism matured during the war, because it exposed many Africans to much wider influences than they had experienced before. The psychological effect of the war and the new social and economic circumstances formed an ideal base on which nationalist leaders could build their demands. The mass support that had been lacking before 1939 now became their most important instrument – but it also put greater pressure on them to make their programmes more radical and to push more urgently for social and constitutional progress.
- Military
service** In this instance, ex-servicemen played a key role. Between 80 000 and 100 000 served the French cause, not only in the mother country but also in North Africa and the Middle East. Britain had recruited widely in East Africa – including the mandated territory of Tanganyika – and had placed these men into service as soldiers and labourers in the East African campaign, which led to the conquest of Ethiopia. As demand increased, voluntary enlistment was augmented by conscription in the territories controlled by Britain and France as well as Belgium, and the British also shipped black troops to India for service in Burma. In total, about one million men were used and as during the First World War, many fled to escape this obligatory service.
- Effects
of con-
scrip-
tion** But there was another side to the coin. Many ex-servicemen returned home with much wider perspectives on life. While doing their service, many had learned new skills, including the ability to read and write, and those who served in Europe and the Far East developed a new political perspective. They were told that they were fighting to preserve freedom and democracy, and in India they saw how fellow colonial subjects protested against British colonial rule. Upon their return they preferred to settle in the urban centres where they swelled the masses who were gathering there. With their broadened perspectives and awareness of the value of education they encouraged an enthusiasm for education among the rest of the urban population. In the Gold Coast, ex-servicemen were behind the Accra riots of 1948 when a demonstration against living conditions eventually exploded into violence as the police started to fire on shop looters.

Political aspirations While the war awakened the African masses, it also heightened the political aspirations of the educated elite. Initially they did not exploit the dilemma of the colonial powers to make extensive demands, and in some colonies financial contributions were made towards the Allied war effort.²² This did not mean that the educated elite was not disenchanted with colonial rule. The economic problems of the inter-war years, the slow progress of social and political reform, Nazi criticism of the colonial regimes, as well as the wartime propaganda which presupposed improvement in return for their loyalty, attended to that. Educated Africans were invited to cooperate with their colonial masters and as a reward, greater political and administrative involvement in government and improved social and educational facilities were promised. Britain began giving concessions while the war was still in progress. It appointed Africans in administrative posts and on the executive councils of the Gold Coast and Nigeria during 1942 and 1943. There were also ambitious plans for social and educational reform after the war. The Free French and the Belgians embarked on the same path, despite the fact that they were not in a position to introduce many of these reforms while the war was still running its course. The Brazzaville Conference visualised a new dispensation for French Africa while Pierre Ryckmans, governor-general of the Belgian Congo between 1934 and 1946, envisaged broad economic and social reform as well as controlled participation for the elite in the political process of the colony.

Position of educated elite The educated elite thus found themselves in a favourable position. Their colonial masters were apologetic about their presence in Africa, while the American attitude towards colonialism (and the British and French empires in particular) proved that their criticism of colonialism had begun to enjoy wider support internationally. Whatever Churchill had to say about the Atlantic Charter, its reference to self-determination was an inspiration to all Africans from Madagascar to Morocco. In the metropolitan countries themselves, voices supporting the elite were heard loud and clear. The Labour Party in Britain, although it lacked strong links with the empire, made it clear that it was opposed to the long-term continuation of the empire while the communists in the ranks of the Free French government, who strongly supported assimilation and did not favour independence as a goal, wanted a closer association of the enfranchised African working class with the international class struggle. The French Socialists saw the future of the colonies as being fully independent, having no constitutional relationship with the mother country.

The Maghrib In North Africa the position was not only different, but also more delicate. The nationalist cause, fuelled by Pan-Arabism, had independence as one of its specific goals, and eventually resulted in violence. Despite the initial sympathy Marshall Pétain's prestige evoked for the Vichy regime, the Maghribians lost their respect for the defeated mother country. Rationing and price increases sparked discontent and Pan-Arabism and German propaganda capitalised on this. The way in which the United States championed the cause of colonial communities also played a major role in fanning anti-French feeling. In Tunisia the Neo Destour Party and the country's new bey flirted with the Germans, while sabotage and arson were the order of the day. Habib Bourguiba sought international and, more particularly, Arab support for Tunisian independence. When the Free French took control of Tunisia they deposed the bey. In Egypt some of the

politicians, as well as army officers such as Gamal Abdul Nasser, sided with the Axis in order to counter British influence. After 1939 the Moroccan sultan, Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef, drew many nationalists to his side and helped the Free French against the Germans, hoping that after the war French indebtedness to him would make it difficult for them to refuse his demands. He was encouraged after his meeting with President Roosevelt on 22 January 1943 and foresaw a new future for his country. In 1944 a new political party, the Istiqlal, was formed. This party, which received discreet support from the palace, brought all of the divided nationalist groups together and strove for immediate independence.

Algeria In neighbouring Algeria the economic contrast between the colons and the Algerian Muslims was further disturbed by the war. Early in the war the French arrested Messali Hadj, leader of the Parti du Peuple Algérien (PPA), but the more moderate Ferhat Abbas favoured reform within the existing constitutional framework. In 1943 he pleaded for equality between the French and the Muslims, and in his Algerian Manifesto he called for an autonomous democratic state in federal relationship with France. De Gaulle responded in 1944 and extended French citizenship and the franchise to the Algerians. They obtained two fifths of the seats in the local governing body, but these concessions did not have the desired effect. The nationalists closed ranks and formed the AML, or Friends of the Manifesto of Freedom, which demanded full autonomy. As the war hastened to its close, Muslim extremists increasingly defied the French government and propagated the idea of a united Arabian empire in North Africa. This resulted in bitter street fighting in 1945 in which both whites and Algerians were killed.

COLONIAL REFORMS

The reforms that were introduced during and shortly after the Second World War had a significant influence on the period of decolonisation that began during the 1950s. The more radical leaders, who gradually took control of the nationalist movements in Africa, showed little gratitude for these reforms and demanded more and faster concessions, which hastened the inexorable process of decolonisation.

British policy Shortly after the war the British adapted the basic principles of their policy. The Labour Party wanted to hand over power to the Africans but, unlike the granting of self-government to India, Pakistan and Ceylon, they regarded African autonomy as a long-term project. With the exception of the Sudan, which appeared to be a special case because it was governed in conjunction with Egypt, the Colonial Office expected the process to take at least a generation, while in other circles the opinion was held that at least fifty years were needed before similar steps could be taken in Africa. For self-government to succeed, a firm basis had to be created and reforms had to extend representation. The creation of economic prosperity was a top priority, making it the foundation upon which good government, education, welfare, medical and administrative services could rest. But creating a firm economic base took time and the Colonial Office hoped that the promise of self-government would satisfy the nationalists meanwhile and moderate the criticism of anti-imperialists who were dissatisfied with the slow progress being made.²³ Partnership between the colonised and the coloniser

became a new cornerstone of British policy, particularly in regions where there was a white minority. Britain hoped to use this principle to reconcile the interests of the whites with those of the indigenous inhabitants. This was also known as multiracialism.

**New
ideas**

Gradually, shortcomings in indirect rule became evident and new ideas on local government began to appear. Since traditional authorities were often unequal to the task in matters involving the use and control of public land, health services, communications and education, development in these areas lagged behind. From the outset indirect rule had been unacceptable to the educated elite because it deprived them of any meaningful participation in the government. In the emerging urban centres where the African intellectual elite or professional middle class, consisting of British-trained doctors, attorneys and teachers, established themselves, they proclaimed European ideas of liberty and there was a strong demand to end autocratic colonial rule. Because of this, indirect rule underwent some changes. After conferences held on African administration in 1945 and 1946, indirect rule was transformed into a more modern system of government. The accent was shifted to 'native authorities' and as far as possible the principle of election of members was introduced to allow the indigenous urban and educated middle class to have some say in government. Until about 1950 the British government was conscious that these adaptations did not fully meet the aspirations of the elite. All support for the traditional chiefs was then dropped and the professional middle class was able to move away from the broad masses and take the lead in the political development of the colonies.

**The pro-
fes-
sional
middle
class in
West Af-
rica**

Before the Second World War the professional middle class in West Africa began to form political parties, and the British government began to appoint some members of this class to the legislative councils of the West African colonies. The greater recognition they were accorded during the war resulted in constitutional developments that gave them a much larger say in the central government. The main problem was no longer whether or not the colonies should be granted greater responsibility, but how soon this should take place. As this step would put an end to the power of the traditional chiefs (a tendency British statesmen wished to prevent) some officials and nationalists advocated a gradual development – one reason why the kind of self-government the British gave to India, Pakistan and Ceylon in 1947 could not be applied to Africa immediately. By 1948 the main priority was to lead the African colonies towards self-government within the Commonwealth and to ensure that they would enjoy a reasonable standard of living, free of oppression from any source. The pace therefore had to be adapted to the ability of the indigenous people to use the power they would receive in a way that would benefit the whole population. To serve this purpose two more Colonial Development Acts followed (in 1949 and 1950) and the Labour government embarked upon a policy of 'Africanisation' by employing more blacks in the colonial service.

**Brazza-
ville
Con-
ference**

The general anti-colonial spirit that emerged as a result of the war made it very difficult for France to retain its hold over its African possessions. In both black and Muslim Africa the inhabitants felt that they were entitled to some kind of reward for their loyalty and De Gaulle was personally in favour of a change in the relationship between colony and metropole. As early as 1942 the French National Liberation Committee

expressed a desire to break with the conservatism, discrimination and economic exploitation of the Vichy regime. This attitude was aimed at resisting the threat of internationalisation and led to the Brazzaville Conference in January and February 1944 when the governor-generals and governors of black Africa and Madagascar met to lay down guidelines for a new dispensation. The indigenous population was not represented at this meeting, and the meeting had no power beyond that of making recommendations. The delegates reconfirmed their intention of retaining the empire, and reference to colonies disappeared shortly after France fell and the Free French became wholly dependent on the empire for their survival. There were no colonies or colonial subjects – only people who regarded themselves as French and who wanted a greater share in the institutions of the French community.

Political reforms The political reforms envisaged at Brazzaville excluded any possibility of self-government and emphasised the principles of centralisation and association. Greater political rights would be exercised within an indivisible French Union consisting of the mother country and its overseas territories. The extension of citizenship to the Algerian Muslims, without compromising their religious status and position before Islamic law and the provision for representation in the National Assembly in 1944, was an effort to strengthen the bond between France and its colony. All parts of the empire were promised proportional representation in a future constituent assembly. Locally they would receive district and regional councils consisting of highly placed blacks who would ensure the support of the traditional authorities. Bodies upon which both whites and blacks could serve and election by universal franchise or co-option and nomination of suitable persons, were other reforms that were visualised. To give the indigenous inhabitants renewed faith in the French, the most unpalatable aspects of French colonialism would be removed: forced labour, the *indigénat*, the status of ‘subject’ instead of citizen; and the legalisation of trade unions was contemplated. In many instances these reforms were mooted by the Popular Front government when it permitted the formation of trade unions and professional associations in 1937.

French Union In 1945 the political situation in France bordered upon the chaotic. When De Gaulle took control and established a government drawn from the resistance movements in France, it included nationalists as well as communists. Despite a communist and socialist majority in the constituent assembly and the signing of the San Francisco Charter of 1946 (which embodied the United Nations guarantee for the recognition of the right of the subject peoples to self-determination), all the anti-colonial sentiments were forgotten when the French created the highly centralised French Union. The communists were staunch supporters of Leninist principles but preferred to see emancipation take place gradually; they believed that it would be counterproductive if the colonies broke their ties with the mother country. Like most French politicians, the Socialists were also opposed to the old colonial system, and through their spokesman, Léon Blum, they referred to the bond between coloniser and colonised. They used terms such as gratitude and goodwill and emphasised common ideals, culture and interests.²⁴

The colonies were given 64 seats in the constituent assembly, but these were filled by representatives of the metropolitan political parties – a decision that reflected the

growing fear that the colonies would break away from the mother country if they were given the opportunity to do so. There were no free negotiations between the colonies and the mother country, and the 'colonial' delegates agreed to the French Union which comprised the overseas departments of French Guinea, Réunion, Guadeloupe and Martinique, and Algeria (all of which were equivalent to metropolitan electoral divisions), the overseas territories or colonies in Africa and the associated states of Tunisia and Morocco.

Belgium No other power was caught off-balance by the changing attitudes to colonialism to the same degree as Belgium. In the new dispensation there was no place for the paternalistic policy on which the Belgians had put so much faith in the inter-war years. As a result of urbanisation a well-to-do middle class came into existence in the Belgian Congo, consisting of traders, entrepreneurs, artisans, church officials and officials in the lower echelons of the civil service. These people became detribalised and turned their backs on their previous tribal way of life. It has been estimated that the number of these évolués increased by 12 per cent between 1939 and 1949.²⁵ Since the Belgians made no provision for this group, they became a class midway between tribal blacks and whites, and although there was no official colour bar in the Belgian Congo, the whites did not absorb them into their ranks. As a class they became more and more frustrated. Belgian efforts at reform during the war included attempts to find a place for the évolués in the colonial hierarchy, but plans for their eventual political participation were not mentioned. The Belgians were in no mood to disband their colony and no thought was given to its possible independence in the future. Instead they favoured the withdrawal of the mandate over Ruanda-Urundi and its incorporation into the Congo as an extra province. The emphasis fell on the improvement of living standards as the best antidote to nationalism.

**At-
tempts
at re-
form**

The position of the évolués was considered, however, and in 1946 the Belgian Socialist government recognised the right to form trade unions. From 1947 onwards, eight delegates represented the indigenous population on the Government Council. By 1951 all were black and included some évolués. A newspaper to express évolué opinion was introduced, and in 1948 a system of civilian merit establishing a new status for those who were on the way to évolué status was introduced. Blacks who could read, who had entered into a monogamous marriage, who had not been convicted in an indigenous court in the previous five years and who qualified for landownership, obtained the right to be tried in a European court. Although these steps testified to the concern of the Belgian government for the position of westernised Congolese, the notion encountered stern opposition from white settlers and civil servants. They associated these steps with total assimilation of Congolese into the white community, and this led to the miscarriage of the government's plans.

**Italy,
Spain,
Portugal**

Not all of the colonial powers acted in this way. Italy, who was suspended from the continent as a result of its defeat in Ethiopia and Libya, was allowed to continue its administration of Somalia under a United Nations Trusteeship agreement which specified that it had to prepare the territory for independence within ten years. This was the first instance of a colonial power having to work towards independence within a fixed

period. Spain and Portugal, who were relatively unaffected by the war, reacted differently. During the war Portugal relaxed its strong economic hold over Angola and Mozambique, whose economies had blossomed because of the increased demand for sisal. The Portuguese economy was sound and solvent and the war brought a temporary lull in foreign claims made on the country's African empire. Communications were developed and immigration increased – all of which contributed to a spirit of optimism. In the late forties the Portuguese dictator, Antonio de Salazar, became sensitive to the new anti-colonial atmosphere that was spreading all over the continent, but by joining the North Atlantic Treaty Association he associated with the Western democracies. This assured Portugal of the sympathy of the United States, Britain and France until about 1960. When he applied for membership of the United Nations, Salazar reconstituted the empire and changed the status of the colonies to that of overseas provinces in order to exempt the country from the world body's discussion of colonial affairs. Portugal also gave much-needed support to Britain, France and Belgium in the anti-colonial debates in the United Nations. Spain continued its policy of integration and assimilation in its tiny possessions in Equatorial Africa, but after its admission into the United Nations in 1955 it started to divest itself of part of its African empire, recognising the independence of Spanish Morocco in April 1956.

THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations

The United Nations played an important role in the decolonisation process that set in after the Second World War, as it became a major platform from which attacks were launched against the colonial powers. The United States initially exercised considerable anti-colonial influence in the world body. It used its influence there to enforce stipulations on human rights and supported the takeover of the former mandated territories by the Trusteeship Council. It also assisted in the admission of smaller nations as full members of the organisation. Soviet Russia supported the United States in all of this. As the newly liberated colonies joined the United Nations, its composition changed. At its foundation there had been thirteen members from the Afro-Asian bloc. Within five years, one third of the total membership of the United Nations consisted of countries from this bloc, and their numbers continued to increase until the 1990s, with the admission of Namibia. The influence of this group of minor states, who demanded the abolition of colonialism, grew continuously. India – who joined the Russo-American anti-colonial campaign and whose independence served as an inspiration for African nationalists – championed their cause, because it wanted Africa's support for the principle of non-alignment in the East–West struggle that dominated world politics after the war. Egypt acted in the same capacity as far as the Arabs were concerned. Because they were non-aligned they enjoyed the support of Latin America and often exploited the differences between the Americans and the Soviets to their own advantage. The Cold War gradually forced the United States to temper its anti-colonialism, since it feared that decolonisation could easily result in Soviet domination. This opened the door for Soviet propaganda: accusing the Americans of favouring colonialism.

**Trustee-
ship
Council**

In this climate the concept of trusteeship, which had stemmed from Roosevelt's ideas on internationalisation, resurfaced. Churchill managed to prevent its adoption while the war was still on but, after his fall, Britain, France, the Netherlands and Belgium came under pressure before they reluctantly agreed to the United Nations Charter, which became the constitution of the new world body. It provided for an international system of trusteeship which embodied very specific aims concerning colonialism, including the political, economic, social and educational upliftment of the inhabitants and their progress towards self-government. The trustees were responsible to the Trusteeship Council – a body including equal numbers of those members who administered trust territories and those who did not. The Trusteeship Council functioned under the General Assembly of the world body and in many respects its principles were similar to the mandate system. But there were important differences too. Both required annual reports but the trusteeship system opened the way for petitions submitted directly from the trust territories without the involvement of the administering authority. At the same time it created opportunities for personal inspection by the Trusteeship Council. This could and did lead to dangerous propaganda being spread by interested persons and groups or states with political axes to grind. Between 1948 and 1955 these petitions increased tenfold and the closer supervision that followed as a result of this led to interference which involved both Britain and France in serious confrontations with the Trusteeship Council. The situation was aggravated because the Trusteeship Council was composed of representatives of governments and not experts on colonial administration. Colonial questions were thus more likely to be considered from a political point of view than on merit.²⁶

**Basic
princi-
ples**

The strong anti-colonial feeling behind the trusteeship idea is further illustrated by changes in terminology. The term 'non-self-governing territories' replaced the word 'colonies', while colonial powers became 'administrating authorities'; the emphasis placed on respect for the cultural heritage of the subject territories made concepts such as assimilation and integration redundant. Basic principles were also laid down for the administration of colonial territories. Apart from recognising that the interests of the indigenous population were 'paramount', the colonial powers had to accept that the responsibility for the development of these areas was a 'sacred trust', to treat the culture of the inhabitants with respect, to treat them fairly, to guard against abuses, and to lead them towards self-government in accordance with their political aspirations. The colonial powers also had to provide the secretary-general of the United Nations with information about economic, social and educational progress in the territories under their control. The United Nations used the stipulation that information on the colonies should be forwarded to it, to give full vent to its views on anti-colonialism. In this respect the recognition that friendly relations should be developed between nations on the principle of self-determination, as recognised in Article 1 of the Charter, played a role. The Security Council was also involved. Although it had no powers in respect of the colonies, it did have a responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security. Consequently colonial affairs, which had been regarded by the colonial powers as purely domestic matters, came up before the Security Council. This complicated the

situation since the Security Council was particularly sensitive to the struggle between East and West after the war.

Reluctance of mandatories

The strong anti-colonial spirit, and the fear held by the British, French and subsequently the Americans, that the United Nations Organisation was endeavouring to gain control over the colonies, made the mandatories reluctant to place the mandates under trusteeship. Initially the mandatories stuck to their purpose of administering the mandatory territories in the interests of the inhabitants, and the intentions they expressed accorded no such rights to the United Nations. A legal gap developed between the supervisory functions of the League, which had come to an end before the trusteeship system of the United Nations came into existence: there had been no official transfer of sovereignty to the United Nations, and this left the mandatory powers in undisputed occupation of these territories.²⁷ The mandatories were eventually persuaded to place their mandates under United Nations trusteeship and, with the exception of South Africa, did so on 13 December 1948. From a strictly legal point of view, South Africa's conduct could not be faulted, but in the light of the anti-colonial mood that prevailed, it turned the South West African issue into a lengthy international struggle which lasted until 1990, when South Africa withdrew from the region.

Anti-colonial pressure

From the outset the General Assembly made its power felt in the trust territories and regularly reminded the trustees that independence had to be granted as soon as possible. The inhabitants of the trust territories gradually became aware of the possibilities of trusteeship – it had become possible to obtain freedom and they applied increasing pressure to attain it. By 1948 it was also clear that the United Nations could intervene in the other British, French, Belgian and Portuguese territories. Indeed, the anti-colonial pressure group – which formed the Afro-Asian group by 1950 – pushed for the extension of the trusteeship system to include all colonial areas. The committees saddled with this task used complicated legal arguments, seeking a new base for sovereignty which could end in the replacement of the juridical authority of the colonial powers. In 1949 Secretary-General Trygve Lie declared that the world organisation's influence in this regard was growing and could spill over from the trust territories to the colonies in Africa.

Libyan independence

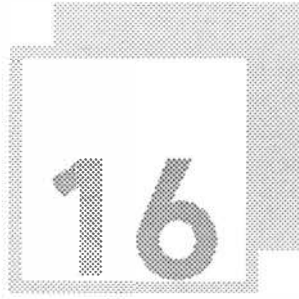
The United Nations' interest in the colonial territories was not confined to this kind of debate. The former Italian colonies of Libya, Eritrea and Somaliland were finally taken away from Italy in 1947 and their fate placed in the hands of the Allied foreign ministers. Sayyid Muhammad Idris, head of the Sanussi Order, who associated with the British during the war in Libya, was the obvious leader in a country where natural unity was lacking. However, the former Allies differed about the country's future, with the Soviets insisting on trusteeship. The matter was referred to the United Nations, who decided that Libya should be granted independence by 1 January 1952. Despite its backwardness and the fact that 90 per cent of its population was illiterate, independence was granted in October 1951. Idris became the constitutional head of a federal system of government.

- Eritrea** Eritrea also came under British control in the Second World War and afterwards a dispute arose between Britain, Ethiopia (whose independence was restored in 1941), and the surrounding Arab lands. Britain wanted to divide Eritrea between Ethiopia and the Sudan, whereas Ethiopia preferred the incorporation of the whole territory into its fold. The Arab states pushed for independence. This dispute was eventually referred to the United Nations and a commission consisting of Burma, Guatemala, Norway, Pakistan and South Africa went to the area to determine the wishes of the inhabitants. After this enquiry and a referendum, Eritrea was incorporated into Ethiopia as a self-governing state in a federal system. In this way Ethiopia secured the harbour of Massawa and the outlet to the sea it so ardently desired, but Ethiopia's plan to annex Eritrea was left unrealised.
- Italian Somaliland** The fate of Italian Somaliland was also referred to the United Nations for a decision in 1950. Since Italy wanted to identify with the new thinking on colonialism and to make amends for its poor reputation in this respect, the world body appointed Italy as the international trustee for a ten-year period ending in independence for this territory in 1960.
- New dispensation** The Second World War undoubtedly brought a new dispensation to Africa. Together with the people of Asia, Africa emerged from the conflict with a new perspective on life and on world politics, while the old colonial powers lost their stature and were replaced by the two super powers, the United States and Soviet Russia. Both were strongly committed to the emancipation of all colonial territories and in the strong anti-colonial atmosphere that evolved from the world conflict, the process of liberation gained momentum. It is this process, which reached a climax in the 1960s, that must now be given closer attention.

Notes

- 1 J. D. Hargreaves, *Decolonization in Africa*, p. 49.
- 2 K. Irvine, *The rise of the coloured races*, pp. 449–450.
- 3 P. Calvocoressi & G. Wint, *Total war*, pp. 164–165.
- 4 M. Crowder, *West Africa under colonial rule*, p. 489.
- 5 R. F. Holland, *European decolonization, 1918–1981: An introductory survey*, p. 41.
- 6 *Unesco, Africa and the Second World War: Reports and papers of the symposium organised by Unesco*, pp. 13–14.
- 7 M. Crowder, 'The Second World War: Prelude to decolonisation in Africa', in M. Crowder (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 8, *From c. 1940 to c. 1975*, p. 21.
- 8 D. W. Urwin, *Western Europe since 1945: A political history*, p. 143.
- 9 W. Louis, *Imperialism at bay, 1941–1945: The United States and the decolonization of the British empire*, p. 27.
- 10 F. Venn, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, p. 94.
- 11 A. J. P. Taylor, *English history, 1914–1945*, p. 649.

- 12 B. Porter, *The lion's share: A short history of British imperialism, 1850–1970*, p. 308.
- 13 T. Smith, *The pattern of imperialism*, pp. 138–141.
- 14 J. Lacouture, *De Gaulle: The rebel, 1890–1944*, p. 277.
- 15 Louis, *Imperialism at bay*, pp. 27–28.
- 16 K. Sainsbury, *The turning point: Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill, and Chiang-Kai Shek, 1943: The Moscow, Cairo, and Teheran conferences*, p. 103.
- 17 K. Ansprenger, *The dissolution of the colonial empires*, p. 157.
- 18 Sainsbury, *The turning point*, p. 103.
- 19 Porter, *The lion's share*, p. 314.
- 20 Sainsbury, *The turning point*, pp. 225–226.
- 21 H. Grimal, *Decolonization: The British, French, Dutch and Belgian empires, 1919–1963*, p. 117.
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- 24 Grimal, *Decolonization*, p. 127.
- 25 Robert L. Delavignette, 'French colonial policy in black Africa, 1945 to 1960', in L. H. Gann & P. Duignan (eds), *Colonialism in Africa, 1870–1960*, vol. 2: *The history and politics of colonialism, 1914–1960*, pp. 260–261.
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The decolonisation of Africa

African revolution In 1945, when the Second World War ended, Africa had only four independent states: in the south the Union of South Africa enjoyed dominion status, in West Africa, Liberia managed to survive the onslaught of imperialism, in Northeast Africa Ethiopia's sovereignty was restored in 1941, while Egypt had a qualified independence – it still housed British occupational forces in the Suez Canal zone. Fifteen years later, in 1960, a year that has been characterised as Africa's 'anno mirabile', or wonder year,¹ the continent had no fewer than 23 independent states and during the 1960s another 17 joined their ranks. An African revolution was indeed in the offing. The post-war years were regarded as a period of 'development and welfare',² but they were also characterised by a realisation by all but one colonial power that the necessity to retain the colonies at all costs had disappeared with the 'civilising mission'. It was no longer economically sound or in the best interests of the mother countries to cling to their colonial possessions. The exception was Portugal, who hung on to the colonial link – perhaps because it could not afford to decolonise.

THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION

World government In the years that followed the Second World War, the colonies in Northeast Africa and the Maghrib advanced to independence much quicker than the territories south of the Sahara desert. Egypt, although unilaterally declared independent by the British in 1922,

led the way in this regard. This was because of its close relationship with the Middle East where Arab countries such as Syria and Lebanon had attained full autonomy during the war. Egypt was a vast centre of British power, but while the fortunes of the struggle in North Africa fluctuated, opinion in Egypt was divided between loyalty for and opposition to the Allied cause. To ensure a favourable position, the British had to bully the unfriendly King Farouk into installing a Wafd government in 1942, when the German threat was at its most serious. Whatever the general opinion on Farouk, Egyptian nationalists were furious at the British action, because Farouk was the personification of Egypt. The British were not particularly interested in the country's domestic politics – the defeat of the Germans in the Libyan desert was their main concern.

**Condi-
tions in
Egypt**

The new Wafd government adopted an ambiguous attitude towards the British. It was sensitive to the fact that the British had put it into power but it also realised that it was dependent upon them for support against a king who would not hesitate to dismiss it. Like the monarchy, the government was riddled with corruption and scandal. Inflation was also rampant, and this caused much public discontent as landowners grew richer and merchants and industrialists prospered from supplying the foreigners with goods and services related to the war. In contrast, the majority of Egyptians sank ever deeper into poverty. The fellahin or peasants lived under appalling conditions. They owned no land and 'were amongst the most downtrodden peoples of the world'.³ Poverty and political killings were everyday occurrences in Egyptian life and extra-parliamentary bodies such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which were strongly opposed to the British presence, grew daily in stature.

**Anglo-
Egyp-
tian re-
lations**

But on one course of action all parties were in agreement: the complete evacuation of the British and restoration of unity with the Sudan would constitute a just reward for the services that the Egyptians had rendered to Britain during the war. This was a concession that even the British Labour Party, with its desire to maintain Britain's dominant position in the Middle East, was obliged to make. In 1946 the Labour Party was confronted with anti-British strikes, demonstrations and violent rioting lead by the Muslim Brotherhood, the Wafd and the communists. This convinced the Labour Party of the need to negotiate, but although they agreed to withdraw from the canal zone by 1949, the questions of regional defence and control of the Nile were avoided and the British instituted steps towards self-government for the Sudan. Anglo-Egyptian relations remained strained.

**Muslim
Brother-
hood**

Events in Palestine, where the state of Israel was formed in May 1948, precipitated a further crisis in Egypt. The country joined the other Arab states in a war against Israel, but the war was a military failure. This increased popular dissatisfaction with the Wafd and King Farouk, especially when it was revealed that defective arms were knowingly supplied to the Egyptian forces by corrupt contractors. The popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood rose sharply because it was the only unit that emerged from the struggle with distinction. Their chances of realising their revolutionary aims improved markedly. When frustrated Egyptians turned their wrath on the British garrison in the canal

zone, the Wafd replied by banning the Muslim Brotherhood and re-opened negotiations on the canal zone with the British in 1951.

Anti-British demonstrations

Difficulties in the Sudan, where nationalists insisted on self-government, soon resurfaced. To save face, the Egyptian government revoked the 1899 condominium and declared Farouk king of both Egypt and the Sudan. Because of the Cold War the British were less inclined to withdraw from the canal zone, and tension rose as they increased their troops there. Consequently the Egyptian government unbanned the Muslim Brotherhood, who took the lead in strong anti-British demonstrations, subjecting them to food and labour boycotts. The Suez base became a target of sabotage in which the Egyptian police was also involved. Strong countermeasures were taken in January 1952 which sparked anger and mob rule in Cairo, again led by the Muslim Brotherhood and assisted by the fascist Young Egyptian Organisation and other militant groups. British property was the aim of these revolutionaries, but Farouk delayed in instructing the army to restore order, eventually doing so shortly before the British moved to intervene from the canal zone. The Wafd government fell and moves to form a new administration failed until the unknown Free Officers' Movement under Major General Muhammad Neguib staged a coup on the night of 22 and 23 July 1952.

Nasser

Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser was the real driving force behind the coup. As a youth he dreamed of freeing his homeland from the British yoke and, together with his school friends, he had been swept along by rampant Egyptian nationalism. Born on 15 January 1918, he completed his schooling in Alexandria before joining the Egyptian Military Academy at the age of 19. He was convinced that the only road to liberation was through the army. He studied the lives of historical figures such as Hannibal, Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Gandhi, Rousseau and Voltaire, while people such as Ahmed el Arabi, Mustapha Kemal and Zaghlul and the revolutionary movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries fired his imagination. But the central driving force of his life was his hatred of the British and of the Egyptian monarchy. When he left the Military Academy in 1938 as a second lieutenant, he was convinced that the Egyptian army would have to be reformed if it was to drive the British from the country. For this

Free Officers' Movement

reason in 1939 he established the Free Officers' Movement as an underground organisation. In 1940, during the early part of the war, Nasser found himself in the fighting lines at El Alamein. While there he continued his revolutionary activities, even making contact with the Germans and the Italians. The firm hold that the British had on Egypt in 1942, when Farouk was forced to appoint a Wafd government, made the monarchy the first target of the movement. Nasser selected the members of the movement with great care in order to eliminate traitors. He also strove to further his position in the army. The higher his rank, he reasoned, the more influence he would be able to wield. By the end of the war he had advanced to the rank of major.

Military coup

The Free Officers' Movement continued to grow after the war and its numbers were swelled as members of the Muslim Brotherhood and some convinced Marxists joined its ranks. The humiliation suffered against Israel strengthened its position still further and the plan to rid Egypt of the king and the presence of the British took shape. The Free Officers moved cautiously into the public arena and General Neguib was ear-

marked to form a new government. Neguib had been wounded during the Israeli War of 1948, but emerged with a solid reputation. Although the Free Officers were not well known, no one hastened to defend the king during the coup of July 1952. By condemning colonialism and promising to divide the land of the rich among the fellahin, the Free Officers were assured of support. The military takeover, which forms part of a chain reaction in the Arab world which began in Damascus in 1949,⁴ was the first of its kind in Africa and created a precedent that was to be repeated regularly on the continent in the post-independence period.

Egyptian revolution

But the Free Officers' Movement was unprepared for the success it achieved – it had no aspirations to govern. Afterwards Nasser wrote that he saw the organisation's role as that of a vanguard whose responsibility would not have taken more than a few hours to complete.⁵ The first problem was how to deal with the king. Two alternatives were considered: execution or exile. Eventually the choice fell on exile, at which point honest politicians could take over. This was a naive view because no such politicians could be found, and within six months the coup had developed into the Egyptian revolution. On 18 June 1953 Egypt became a republic governed by the Revolutionary Command Council. This did not signify the end of the new government's domestic problems. The Muslim Brotherhood remained a rival movement and was too strong to be removed overnight. Only after the Brotherhood attempted to assassinate Nasser in 1954 were they decisively crushed. Neguib was removed under suspicion of cooperation and Nasser became prime minister. The new government also set out to purge the nation of corruption, since the political revolution could succeed only if a successful social revolution took place.

Sudan

With this in mind, the government was not averse to solving the Sudanese problem. General Neguib (himself half Sudanese) shared British views and declared himself in favour of self-determination. This ended the possibility of a unitary state along the Nile, and the British came to an agreement with the Egyptians in 1952; a period of self-government preceded the introduction of self-determination. A Sudanese parliament was empowered to decide the future form of government. The administration was 'sudanised' and both British and Egyptian military forces withdrew in 1955. The Sudan opted for independence, which was achieved in the course of the following year.

Evacuation

British troops were still present in the canal zone, however. In the midst of Egypt's many internal problems, negotiations for a British withdrawal began in April 1953 in an atmosphere that favoured the Egyptians. There was constant pressure on Britain from the United States to come to a satisfactory solution of the problem, and the advent of the hydrogen bomb made the concentration of a large military base in a restricted area unattractive. The maintenance of the base was expensive too, and the terrorist activities of Egyptian nationalists added to the costs because the British had to keep a larger force than was normally necessary. However, it was only in 1954 that the British agreed to withdraw all their personnel, to leave the maintenance work on the canal in the hands of Anglo-French civilian companies and to hand the military command to Egypt. Nasser concluded the final agreement with the British in October 1954. They would evacuate the area by June 1956, subject to one proviso: they would return in the

event of an attack on Egypt, Turkey or any Arab state – a condition that arose directly from British fears of Soviet expansion in the Middle East.

THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN THE MAGHRIB

- Nation-
alists** The Second World War was a setback as well as a stimulant for the nationalist movement in French North Africa. The movement remained alive beneath the surface, and consequently the French had to face strong opposition after the war. As in Egypt, international circumstances favoured the Maghribian nationalists, especially when the Cold War intensified. This gave the military bases in the region special significance for the United States and ensured American support for the nationalists in the belief that this would disconcert the Soviet Union, who posed as the logical anti-colonial ally.
- Setif
rising** France had the first taste of the severity of nationalist demands on the day the cease fire was signed in Europe. The Setif rising was the most serious disturbance in Algeria since 1871 and stemmed from the growing social and economic inequality between the two population groups and from budding Arab nationalism.
- De-
mands
for Tun-
isian
inde-
pend-
ence** The first demand for independence came from Tunisia, the most westernised and politically aware region in the Maghrib. During the war Bourguiba had cooperated to some extent with the French, but because of their hostility towards him he moved to Cairo. Here he hoped to enlist not only international support but also Arab support for Tunisian independence. This was not forthcoming and the Arab League also proved disappointing. When the French refused the demands of moderate Tunisian politicians in 1946, they closed ranks with the Neo Destour in a demand for independence. After tours of Britain and United States, Bourguiba returned to Tunisia where he was received with great acclaim. He improved party organisation and the French realised that an agreement with the Tunisian nationalists was necessary. In 1950 they made a seven-point plan and the Socialist government agreed to introduce autonomy in progressive phases.
- Colon
opposi-
tion** Tunisia's 240 000 colons, supported by Algeria's white population, were vehemently opposed to this development, and late in 1951 the French government retracted and announced that no further reforms would be introduced. Bourguiba was arrested before he could travel to New York, where he wanted to put Tunisia's case before the Security Council of the United Nations. In 1951 the Afro-Asian bloc declared its willingness to support his demand while the Tunisian Trade Union called a general strike resulting in more arrests and virtual insurrection. Terrorist groups were active in the south too, and this affected the two neighbouring French colonies. The French now had a clear choice between recognition of Tunisian independence and government by strong-arm means.
- Moroc-
co: Sul-
tan Mu-
ham-
mad** Meanwhile the French position in Morocco was also deteriorating. Attempts to introduce liberal reforms in 1946 only agitated the protectorate's 400 000 whites and failed to win the confidence of Sultan Mohammed. In 1947 he affiliated himself with the Arab world and strengthened his ties with the Istiqlal, while the colon resident-general, Alphonso Juin, worked towards a permanent French–Moroccan connection. The

French assigned a definite role to the Moroccans and saw themselves as the indispensable modernisers of the country. The sultan was a serious stumbling block, because his Pan-Arabic views and predilection for nationalism and internal sovereignty ruled out the possibility of a joint French–Moroccan sovereignty. The sultan could only pressurise the French through refusal to sign certain decrees, and consequently they decided to get rid of him. To do so, Juin utilised the traditional differences between Berber and Arab. When disturbances between Mohammed and the rural population occurred in 1953, the French seized the opportunity and banned him. This ended in unrest, which enhanced Mohammed's position, while his docile successor and the French were unable to introduce the policy of dual sovereignty. The new sultan was confined to the palace and failed to rally any support. Attempts were made upon his life; social and economic reform came to a standstill and terrorism increased. A Moroccan Liberation Army was established and divisions appeared among French political leaders about policy in the protectorate.

Tunisian independence In 1954 France contemplated concessions in both Tunisia and Morocco, a decision that was influenced by its deteriorating position in Indochina. While the Indochinese peace conference took place in Paris, Bourguiba was released from prison and the French prime minister, Pierre Mendes-France, visited Tunisia and recognised Tunisia's right to autonomy. When some Tunisians expressed themselves in favour of self-government instead of independence, Mendes-France granted it on 31 July 1954. A delighted Bourguiba stated that a decisive stage had been reached on the road to restoration of complete sovereignty, with independence as the final goal. It then became possible through 'close co-operation between the two peoples, conscious of their solidarity – co-operation from which all ideas of domination will be banished'.⁶

Morocco independent monarchy During 1955 conditions in Morocco remained unsettled and serious anti-French uprisings occurred. When problems elsewhere in the French empire assumed alarming proportions, the French realised that matters were made worse by the sultan's absence and in September they asked him to return. He agreed, on condition that he could lead Morocco to independence before the question of interdependence with France could be considered. The Moroccan Liberation Army launched attacks on the French in the Rif Mountains to enforce Mohammed's claim. The French conceded and Morocco became an independent monarchy on 2 March 1956 under Mohammed, henceforth known as Mohammed V. In May the question of interdependence was settled and the way was prepared for cooperation on various levels as equals. Spain soon followed this example, yielding control of Spanish Morocco on 7 April 1956 and returning the international town of Tangier to Morocco a few months later.

Tunisian republic These developments convinced Tunisia that the self-government it enjoyed was no longer satisfactory and negotiations for independence were resumed when France acknowledged that Tunisia was ready for the same status as Morocco. Bourguiba's attitude ruled out any cooperation with the bey and Tunisia became a republic. Clashes with France continued as a result of Tunisia's sympathy with the Algerian struggle for independence. This was aggravated by the continued presence of French troops in the country and the frequent incidents that occurred on the Tunisian/Algerian border.

Another source of rivalry lay in the desire for unity expressed by North African Arabs. This had implications for the great naval base at Bizerta, and when the French and the Algerians began to negotiate in 1962, Bourguiba demanded the withdrawal of all French troops from the country – a step that was taken after some serious clashes in June. Strategic air bases in Morocco, which the United States had maintained since the Second World War, were evacuated when Morocco applied pressure. Like Tunisia, Morocco supported Algeria in its struggle for independence.

Algeria French hopes that the end of the war in Indochina and the improvement of conditions in Tunisia in 1954 would give her some respite were dashed when armed Algerian guerrillas launched attacks on several parts of the colony on 1 November 1954. This was stimulated not only by the success achieved by Tunisia and Morocco in their struggle for independence, but also by Algerian nationalism, which had blossomed after the Setif rising of 1945. Ferhat Abbas, who had not believed in an Algerian nation prior to this, declared that a visible change had set in⁷ and moderate Algerian leaders expressed their doubts about French motives in their country.

Ben Bella and the FLN Despite De Gaulle's suggested reforms (which contained many concessions) Messali Hadj reappeared to establish the extremist Movement for the Triumph of Liberal Democracy (MTLD) while the Organisation Spéciale (the military wing of the MTLD) was founded by Ben Bella in Cairo in 1947. But Algerian resistance suffered because of personal rivalry between the leaders and lack of support in the United Nations before 1952. The French acted against some of the leaders and Ben Bella was imprisoned. He managed to escape to Cairo, where he organised the Front for the Liberation of Algeria (FLN) and demanded the restoration of sovereignty. If France did not comply, the FLN threatened to start a guerrilla war and to use diplomatic pressure in the United Nations to force France's hand. The rebellion was initially of a limited nature,⁸ which misled the French, but they soon realised that they were dealing with well-organised resistance. The rebellion became a major political issue since politicians in France were divided on it. Algeria was seen as part of France and withdrawal from the two neighbouring colonies was regarded as a preliminary step to allow France more room to manoeuvre when dealing with Algeria. An added factor was the contact of the colons with families in France, as this could influence the position of the many weak governments within the country at that time. No government wanted to add to its unpopularity by withdrawing from the Algerian war – irrespective of the unpopularity of the war itself.

In-creased pressure While the mother country debated the issue, the FLN steadily increased its pressure, and France began to lose the support of the masses. Political instability in France did not help matters, and the army's role and influence in Algeria increased. The decision-makers in Algeria were army officers who believed that negotiations with the FLN could start only after it was militarily defeated – a situation which lasted until De Gaulle returned to power in 1958.

PAN-AFRICANISM AND DECOLONISATION IN TROPICAL AFRICA

Italian
inva-
sion of
Ethiopia

At the beginning of the Second World War, nationalism in sub-Saharan Africa was much less advanced than in the Arab north. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia, however, strongly stimulated nationalist feelings, because African and Afro-American intellectuals saw Italy's move as an attack on all blacks and their civilisations throughout the world. Many years after the event, Kwame Nkrumah, who arrived in London at the time of the invasion, said that he had felt as if the whole of the British capital had declared war on him personally when he learned about the invasion from a newspaper poster. West Indians such as George Padmore and Africans such as Jomo Kenyatta and Dr J. B. Danquah from the Gold Coast formed the International African Friends of Ethiopia to protest against Italy's conduct and organised a demonstration at Waterloo Station when Haile Selassie arrived there in 1936. This was the limit of their protesting ability,⁹ but it underlines the politicising effect of the Ethiopian war and how it started a sincere commitment to Pan-Africanism and the eventual liberation of Africa among blacks in London. With the foundation of George Padmore's African Service Bureau in 1937, the International African Friends of Ethiopia joined the organisation which at first arranged debates and lectures and propagated its Marxist but non-Communist ideas in its journal, *International African Opinion*.

Pan-
Afri-
can
Federation

During the war the number of Africans and West Indians in London increased and since they were members of the Commonwealth and involved in war production, they achieved political significance. Although they called for a clear statement on the future of the colonies from the British government, they remained virtually inactive until 1943, when they began to think in terms of a Pan-African organisation which would function in terms of the Atlantic Charter. In 1944 a loose umbrella association, the Pan-African Federation, was formed, apparently under the initiative of George Padmore, to prepare for the fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester the following year.

Man-
chester
Congress;
Young
African
militants

The Manchester Congress was one of a chain of reactions that was sparked by the Ethiopian crisis of 1936. It differed from previous congresses in many respects. Although W. E. B. du Bois, one of the fathers of Pan-Africanism, was elected to the chair after the proceedings began, this was merely a gesture to link the congress with the previous ones, for which he had been largely responsible. For the first time, Africa was well represented as 26 of the 90 delegates came from Africa and the remainder from the West Indies. There were no American Negroes. Ministers and academics no longer dominated proceedings but were forced into the background by a generation of young militants, including Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Hastings Banda and T. R. Makonnen (a British Guinean who had adopted an Ethiopian name). Twenty of Africa's delegates came from West Africa, but there were no representatives from Liberia or Ethiopia despite the Charlton Town Hall being decorated with the flags of these two countries. Many West African delegates were members of newly established trade unions and this bridged the gap between the elite and the masses which had characterised earlier congresses. This new link also fused the intellectualism of Du Bois and the West African Students Union with Garvey's mass movement.

Mass movement

The Manchester Congress was a mass movement exuding a spirit of anti-imperialism under circumstances far more favourable than previous congresses. The Second World War had ended only a few months earlier and the Pan-Africanists expected much of the ruling British Labour Party. The new Labour leaders could support and encourage each other to initiate an anti-colonial programme as they argued on the grievances of the coloured people. Because Padmore and Nkrumah acted as joint secretaries throughout the congress, it is obvious that the influence of Padmore's International African Service Bureau was of decisive importance.¹⁰ Resolutions were passed demanding freedom and the creation of a united states of Africa. A call was made for an end to political and economic oppression and all discriminatory legislation so that Africans could enjoy basic human rights. They also laid emphasis on the African Personality and the value of Africa's indigenous institutions and affirmed the belief that the traditional communalism of African societies was essentially socialist, but in the light of the continent's strong religious traditions it was considered to be anti-Marxist. Socialism was seen as the only way of solving the problems of poverty and hunger. The Western governments were challenged to remain loyal to the Atlantic Charter.¹¹ The congress also accepted the use of strikes and boycotts to achieve its demands and declared that it believed in peace but, in the last resort, might have to make use of force if the Western world insisted on ruling mankind – because they were determined to be free. The declaration ended by calling on all colonial peoples to unite.¹²

West African National Secretariat

After the congress, the Pan-African Federation attempted to keep the momentum of Manchester alive, but not much was achieved. Du Bois was called upon to plead their case at the United Nations while Nkrumah and I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson, encouraged by Padmore, established the West African National Secretariat in 1946. This aimed at securing independence for all the West African colonies as a prelude to the formation of the united states of Africa which had been envisaged at Manchester. In its journal, the *New African*, the idea of unity – including the French and Portuguese colonies in West Africa – was promoted, but West Africa is a wide geographical concept and efforts to lure French West Africa into a united West African socialist republic failed. The secretariat also served as a link between nationalist leaders in British West Africa and the Labour government in London.

Kwame Nkrumah

In 1947 Nkrumah was presented with the opportunity of embarking on a political career and returning to Africa: he was invited to become the general secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention, a political organisation in the Gold Coast bent on exploring ways to independence.¹³ In this way one of Pan-Africanism's greatest supporters returned to Africa, presented with the opportunity of applying the movement's ideals on the continent. But he and other Pan-Africanists, who later followed him to Africa, devoted all their efforts to the achievement of independence. For a time the quest for a united continent was relegated to the background as the struggle for independence proceeded.

THE CHALLENGE FROM THE GOLD COAST

United
Gold
Coast
Con-
vention

The men who invited Nkrumah to return to the land of his birth came from an older generation of businessmen, rich farmers, chiefs and lawyers who prospered under the colonial regime. They were the men to whom the Labour government was willing to grant power – part-time politicians looking towards independence within ten years – a period during which they would keep pressure on the British through widespread use of the masses. It was for this purpose that they called upon Nkrumah, who began reorganising the United Gold Coast Convention as soon as he arrived home. He made contact with dissatisfied ex-servicemen who complained about social conditions, and before long the United Gold Coast Convention became involved in violent demonstrations in Accra in 1948, when a boycott was imposed against European and Lebanese stores in protest against the rise in prices of imported goods. Though the United Gold Coast Convention had little to do with the boycott or the ensuing excesses, it seized the opportunity this presented and demanded government be handed over to an interim authority and a constituent assembly be formed. Instead, the Labour government appointed the Coussey Commission, an all-African body, to formulate further constitutional recommendations. As far as the constitution was concerned, the Gold Coast was at this stage the most extensively developed British colony in West Africa. In terms of the Burns constitution of 1946, the protectorate and the colony were represented in the legislative council, where the Africans held a majority; five were elected by the towns on a limited franchise. The Coussey Commission found that this constitution was dated and suggested the introduction of a full parliamentary system. By the time this report appeared in 1949 and was accepted by the British, the scenario in the Gold Coast had changed dramatically.

In the aftermath of the Accra riots, five leaders of the United Gold Coast Convention, including Nkrumah, were arrested. The others blamed Nkrumah for this and the first cracks appeared in their ranks. Nkrumah was temporarily demoted but resumed his work after his release from gaol and founded a nationalist newspaper, the *Accra Evening News*, for the party in September 1948. After the leaders joined the Coussey Commission, tension was renewed, aggravated by the social differences between Nkrumah (who came from a poor and isolated region in the country) and the representatives of the professional class in the United Gold Coast Convention. The situation deteriorated when an unsigned membership card of the British Communist Party was found in Nkrumah's possession: only his popularity throughout the country prevented his expulsion from the United Gold Coast Convention.

Con-
vention
Peo-
ple's
Party

The Coussey Commission was still in session when Nkrumah broke away from the party. Using his popularity among young people, whom he coordinated in the Committee of Youth Organisations, he gathered together the radical anti-colonialists and formed the Convention People's Party in June 1949. The new party was sharply critical of the Coussey Commission, calling it 'an imperialist fraud' and demanding 'self-government now', which they defined as full dominion status within the Commonwealth. Nkrumah reiterated his demands in a campaign of 'positive action', which involved strikes, boycotts and non-cooperation with the British. Based on the Gandhian

pattern, it was designed to cultivate consciousness of struggle throughout the colony. This inevitably led to disturbances, and Nkrumah and other Convention People's Party leaders were imprisoned, each receiving sentences of one year. Meanwhile the British government announced the terms of the new constitution and organised an election for February 1951, which the Convention People's Party won despite its decision to boycott the Coussey constitution. Nkrumah was elected while in prison and the governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, released him so that he could form a government. Nkrumah abandoned his claim for immediate self-government and worked under the Coussey constitution. Meanwhile the British agreed to a brief transitional period.

The Convention People's Party was radical and had a popular following but these moves ended the period of violence and confrontation and Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke continued to cooperate towards the Gold Coast's complete independence. A demand for this was embodied in a unanimous motion taken in the legislative assembly in July 1953, but as independence drew closer, differences and opposition to the Convention People's Party emerged. The British tested these divisions by holding general elections in 1954 and 1956.

Togo Although Nkrumah won the 1956 election by a clear margin, the future of the United Nations trust territory of Togo remained a problem. The Ewe tribe agitated to join their brethren in French Togoland but a United Nations plebiscite, held in May 1956, established that a majority of the inhabitants of British Togoland preferred to unite with an independent Gold Coast. This was the position when the Egyptian leader, Nasser, nationalised the Suez Canal Company; this set in motion a train of events which was to influence the decolonisation process dramatically, not only in the British colonies, but also in French Africa.

FRANCE AND BLACK AFRICA

Constitution of 1946 Nationalism in French black Africa was strongly affected by the esteem blacks felt towards French culture and by their close association with politics in Paris – loyalty and involvement which had arisen from the traditional French policy of assimilation and centralisation. When the constitution of 1946 was compiled, no part of French black Africa asked for independence or autonomy¹⁴ and with the exception of a rebellion in Madagascar in 1947 (where French setbacks in Indochina had a direct influence) and some rebelliousness in the Ivory Coast in the same year, the road to independence in the two federal blocs was peaceful.

Bamako Congress Many leaders regarded the 1946 constitution as inadequate because it did not give the same rights to everyone and the colonial territories still had minority representation in the French National Assembly. The other two bodies, the High Council of the French Union and the Assembly of the French Union, had only advisory powers – Léopold Senghor regarded it as 'a marriage of convenience'. In the wake of the new constitution, a few small political parties appeared in the colonies, but disagreement among the black leaders and their close association with political parties in the mother country prevented any strong action. With the exception of the French Communist Party none

of the metropolitan parties championed the idea of autonomy for the colonies. This caused dissatisfaction, and Félix Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, with an eye on the promotion of greater West African unity and more purposeful anti-colonial action, organised a congress of all the political leaders in Bamako in 1946.

RDA At Bamako a regional approach was adopted to politics in France's African federations and the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA) was formed under the leadership of Houphouët-Boigny. The party addressed itself to all levels of society and aimed at uniting blacks in the struggle against colonialism. It hoped to 'free Africa from the colonial yoke by the affirmation of her personality and by the association – freely agreed to – of a union of nations'. Initially the RDA enjoyed the support of the French Communist Party, which in turn cost the RDA the support of Senghor and Senegal. By 1950 tension between the RDA and the French administration resulted in sporadic violence. This, and the decline of the French Communist Party, persuaded Houphouët-Boigny to sever his links with the communists. He purged his party of more radical elements and made it a purely African party which would cooperate with the mother country in obtaining self-government before giving any attention to possible federation with France. This cost the RDA some of its regional influence and in the 1951 French elections it had only three representatives in the National Assembly, of whom one was Houphouët-Boigny.

Loi Cadre After 1951 the fortunes of the party gradually improved, and in the 1956 election the RDA won 9 out of the 21 African seats in the French National Assembly. In these years there were strong rumours that the British were to grant the Gold Coast independence and this forced the French government to make some kind of concession to the nationalists in French West Africa. Houphouët-Boigny, by then the most influential politician in French Africa, was included in the Socialist government that was formed in France in 1956. In the midst of growing criticism about the lack of opportunity for blacks to participate in the regional governments of the two federations, Houphouët-Boigny and the Minister for Overseas Territories, Gaston Defferre, formulated the Loi Cadre, a measure that was later regarded by some as a palliative. Nevertheless it laid the foundation for reform that changed the whole face of the French empire in black Africa.

The Loi Cadre affected the decentralisation or balkanisation of French black Africa because each separate administration could introduce the reforms it considered necessary by means of decrees. Universal suffrage was introduced and each territory received its own executive council with a majority of elected members. This was an obvious attempt to conform with the British method, because it allowed constitutional growth while preventing the kind of insurgence that had occurred in French North Africa – where the Algerian war continued, causing great disruption. While the French were trying to satisfy black African nationalists in this way, Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal – an event which changed the course of decolonisation in Africa dramatically, for the upheaval it caused had widespread repercussions.

THE SUEZ CRISIS

Egypt non-aligned

As a result of the Cold War, the West wanted to keep the Russians out of the Middle East while Egypt adopted a non-aligned stance. Egypt and Israel feared each other and the flow of French weapons to Israel caused Nasser to turn to the Soviets because he could not obtain the arms he wanted from London or Washington. His attendance of the Bandung Conference, where the principle of non-alignment assumed a specific connotation (which the West regarded with the utmost suspicion), as well as his recognition of Communist China in 1956, brought further estrangement.

The Aswan Dam

The interests of American cotton farmers also affected events at this time: 1956 was presidential election year in the United States, and the country's cotton farmers requested the government to cancel the aid it had promised Egypt in 1955 to improve the Aswan Dam. This aid formed part of a hydroelectricity project the United States had undertaken together with Britain and the World Bank. The dam's greater capacity would also increase the Egyptian cotton crop threefold. The American cotton farmers found this untenable: they argued that the American taxpayers were being used to finance direct Egyptian competition.

Nationalisation of the Suez Canal

No presidential candidate was willing to undertake a risk such as this and the aid was cancelled. Britain and the World Bank soon followed suit and Nasser, dissatisfied with the income Egypt derived from the Suez Canal, nationalised it on the fourth anniversary of the Egyptian revolution. He wanted to use this income to finance the Aswan Dam project, but undertook to compensate the shareholders of the Suez Canal Company for their losses. The United States, France and Britain protested. To the British, the Suez Canal was still a lifeline to the East and Anthony Eden, the British prime minister, who believed that Nasser was behind many of the anti-British activities in the Middle East, saw an opportunity to remove him from power. He contacted the French, who in turn believed that Nasser supported the Algerian rebels. They cooperated with the British to formulate a secret plan to remove Nasser. The scheme implied the use of force: Nasser would reject an ultimatum that would be phrased in such a way that he could not possibly accept it. The plan could not be implemented immediately, however, because neither Britain nor France was ready to act militarily. While they prepared for this, the United States made unsuccessful attempts to effect a diplomatic settlement, but Nasser refused to accept Dulles's plan to place the canal in the hands of an international agency. The Americans decided to use the route around the Cape instead, and promised aid to this effect to those who lacked the means to do so. In September 1956, the canal was still functioning well and the whole issue was referred to the United Nations. Meanwhile the French drew the Israelis into the crisis without the knowledge of the British.

Anglo-French ultimatum

To ensure a continued flow of French arms, the Israelis had to schedule the attack on Egypt as close to the American presidential election as possible. The Jewish vote in the United States would prevent the Americans from protecting Nasser. Meanwhile the United Nations laid the foundation for a settlement which Eden refused to accept – he preferred to keep to the prearranged plot. On 29 October 1956 the Israelis attacked, and

an Anglo-French ultimatum to the warring parties that they cease hostilities followed the next day. Nasser refused to comply, whereupon the British and the French attacked Cairo and Port Said from the air, destroying Egypt's air force and occupying the northern part of the canal zone. This drew the super powers into the arena and the Soviets found an excellent smokescreen for their brutal suppression of the Hungarian revolt in Budapest. The Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, offered the Egyptians military aid,¹⁵ and threatened to attack Britain and France with rockets. The United States failed to come to the aid of its allies, partly because their action smacked of old-fashioned imperialism and partly because it would have driven its Arab oil suppliers into Soviet hands. Consequently it supported the United Nations resolution which called for a ceasefire and demanded the withdrawal of all troops. Under the circumstances there was little that Britain and France could do, and for them the crisis ended ingloriously. Instead of being removed, Nasser emerged as a British-made martyr with a greatly improved standing in the Arab and African world.

Implications The crisis was a tremendous blow to Western prestige and the British realised that they had lost their former power. Thereafter Britain had to put even more effort into accommodating Afro-Asian nationalism, and soon the French were also made aware of the far-reaching implications of the incident as far as its colonies were concerned. The Suez crisis certainly gave the decolonisation of Africa more momentum. This became evident in the Gold Coast shortly afterwards and was also seen in the new attitude the French adopted towards black Africa and Algeria in 1958.

BRITAIN AND THE 'WIND OF CHANGE'

Ghanaian independence The negative image which the Suez crisis gave Britain made it imperative for it to show another face to a critical world. An opportunity to do so presented itself in the Gold Coast. The date for the colony's independence had been fixed before the Suez crisis had reached its climax – and on 6 March 1957 the former West African colony, now named Ghana, became independent. This name had been popular among Gold Coast nationalists ever since the 1930s, although it refers to a medieval Sudanic trading kingdom with which present-day Ghana has no direct links. On the night of Ghana's independence, Nkrumah dedicated himself and the newly independent country of which he was now the leader, to the struggle for African independence in Africa. Explaining this, he said that 'our independence is meaningless unless it is linked with the total liberation of the African continent'. Nkrumah soon made contact with the heads of those states which had already become independent, as well as the leaders of liberation movements in regions that were still under colonial rule.

Nigeria Nigeria was the first British colony in West Africa to follow the example of the Gold Coast. In 1957 the British government promised Nigeria, their largest colony in the region, independence if its leaders saw their way clear to cooperating in a formally constituted federal structure. This system was compiled with careful attention to the complicated ethnic and cultural composition of the territory – which the Yoruba leader, Obafemi Awolowo, described as a 'geographical expression' and whose existence as a single nation he attacked vigorously in 1947.¹⁶ In Nigeria there was a complete absence

of cultural and economic ties between the Muslim north, under its aristocratic Fulbe leaders, and the westernised, Christian and commercially oriented south, which was subdivided between the Ibos in the east and the Yorubas in the west, with a variety of small tribes living between them.

Federation Influences from the Gold Coast reached the usually loyal and contented Nigeria by 1947, and the changes the British introduced in the following year gave power to regional councils. These changes were directed at the Western-educated elite in the south and the British feared that the Muslim north would not participate in British efforts to introduce a federal form of government for the whole territory. Democratic political awareness was much higher in the south and when the constitution was revised in 1951, it introduced the principle that the north would henceforth be subject to supervision by the more advanced south. Nigeria was organised into a loose federation, but this dispensation was not acceptable to all and in 1954 further amendments were made to the constitution in an effort to balance the regional autonomy with greater involvement of regional politicians at central government level. To ensure the success of this arrangement, self-government and the prospect of independence was promised.

Willink Commission The British offer of federal power in 1957 was sufficient to induce leaders from the northeastern regions, inspired by mutual fear of the West, to form a coalition. After regional elections had clarified the situation, Sir Abubakar Tafewa Balewa, a northerner, emerged as the strongest leader. However, fears about minority rights persisted and in 1958 the Willink Commission recognised that sufficient grounds existed to justify these fears. The Willink Commission rejected any division of Nigeria into smaller regions and even made suggestions on reducing the number of these regions, but the suggestions were ignored. As soon as the limitations on the north's power were lifted, attention turned to independence – this immense region could then dominate the colony politically in coalition with the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) of Azikiwe. Independence was granted in October 1960.

East Africa The compulsive force of nationalism spread to East Africa more rapidly than the British realised. Constitutional development similar to that in West Africa was more complicated, however, because the whites, especially those in Kenya, demanded alternative measures to those applied in West Africa. The British opted for multiracial constitutions, not only in Kenya but also in Tanganyika, which became a trusteeship territory under the supervision of the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. Economically and educationally this colony lagged far behind the other two East African territories, but in accordance with the trusteeship agreement, the British government undertook to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants and to guide them towards self-government and independence in accordance with their wishes. The result of this was that Tanganyika became independent before the other British East African territories.

Nyerere and Tanu Apart from being in the international limelight, other circumstances in Tanganyika favoured the colony's advance to independence. There were no sharp ethnic differences between the inhabitants, and no large tribes could dominate the smaller ones. Swahili

was already recognised as a general language and the number of whites was small. Furthermore, Tanganyika's most prominent nationalist leader, Julius Nyerere, had the support of the whites as well as that of the Asians living in the territory. After Nyerere's return to his native country he reorganised the Tanganyika African Association before reconstituting it into the Tanganyika African National Union (Tanu), based upon Nkrumah's example. When a United Nations commission visited Tanganyika in 1954, Nyerere gained its recognition for his mass movement and in 1955 this commission recommended that Tanganyika become independent in twenty years time. This notion met with the opposition of Tanganyikans, the British government and the Trusteeship Council – they all felt that this was far too slow.

Independence

Nyerere criticised the British preference for a multiracial constitution, pointing out that Tanganyika was primarily an African territory and had to develop as such. However, he gave the British the assurance that an African government would certainly not be prejudiced against any other element of the population. This won him the support of the whites and Asians as well as that of London, and Tanu won the 1958 election by a large margin on the basis of a non-racial democracy. This was the turning point, and two years later the principle of parity was discarded and a new constitution was accepted which included responsible ministers. At that point Tanu won all but one of the seats and Nyerere became chief minister in May 1961, leading the trust territory to independence in December.

Uganda Although there were no white settlers in Uganda, this colony's path to independence was complicated by the existence of strong domestic disunity between the kingdom of Buganda and the other traditional kingdoms of Ankole, Bunyoro, Toro and Busoga in the south and in the east. Personified by its king, Bugandan nationalism was exclusive and refused to sacrifice any privileges to the other kingdoms. In contrast to British preference for separate independence, the British governor, Sir Andrew Cohen, strove towards a unitary state, and in 1953 the Bugandan king was banned. This resulted in a great deal of turbulence which was not solved until the return of the Bugandan king, Mutesa II. At that point blacks were given a majority in the legislative council. From 1959 the Bugandans began to cooperate with the radical Ugandan Peoples' Congress, and this led to a victory at the polls in 1962. A strong federal constitution was adopted and Uganda became independent in October 1962.

Kenya; Mau Mau rebellion

With the rejection of the multiracial system in Tanganyika, its application in Kenya was also doomed, and after 1959 the British stopped experimenting with multiracial constitutions that were expected to take twenty years to evolve. The new attitude was confirmed by the Mau Mau rebellion which broke out in 1951 and which took the British four years to bring under control. This rebellion was directly related to the land question, with land-hungry Kikuyu, who were living under deteriorating social and economic circumstances, casting envious eyes on the white highlands where Kikuyu had once roamed. The Mau Mau was also supported by radical elements in the ranks of the Kenya African Union who disagreed with the gradual development towards self-rule which the moderate members preferred. Although Kenyatta was one of the radicals, his share in the formation and organisation of the Mau Mau – primarily a

Kikuyu terrorist organisation – is unknown. By using Western organisational methods and Kikuyu oath-swearing ceremonies, including the drinking of blood and the swearing of a bond of allegiance to death, these members acted not only against whites but, even more so, against those blacks who sympathised with the whites. When white Kenyans called upon the government to act against the Mau Mau, Kenyatta and other leaders were arrested while British troops and loyal Kikuyu units were employed to contain Mau Mau activities. Detention camps were set up and opportunities were created for Mau Mau members to renounce their oaths. A state of emergency remained in force until 1960 when only sporadic incidents still occurred.

**Kanu
and
Kadu**

Despite the lack of international support the Mau Mau rebellion managed to stop European immigration to Kenya, exposed the inability of Kenya's whites to defend themselves and slowed down constitutional development. When the British relinquished the idea of multiracial constitutions in 1959, constitutional development regained some momentum. Blacks obtained the majority in the legislative council in 1961, and two new political organisations were formed. The Kenya African National Union (Kanu) represented the Kikuyu and Lua tribes as well as urbanised blacks. It elected Kenyatta as president. He had been released from prison in 1959, but was restricted to the north of the colony. The other political body, the Kenya National Democratic Union (Kadu), represented the smaller tribes, and mutual mistrust between these parties became a new delaying factor in Kenya's constitutional development. Kadu preferred a federal Kenya while Kanu wanted a unified state. These two groups had only their desire for independence in common. The British government, who sided with black nationalism against Kenyan whites, Asiatics and moderate blacks who continued to work for a multiracial dispensation, suggested a compromise in 1962. Six strong regional governments with wide powers were introduced and when Kanu won an election in terms of this constitution, Kadu had to accept the humiliation. Kenya became independent on 12 December 1963.

**Feder-
ation of
Rhode-
sia and
Nyasa-
land**

In British Central Africa, efforts to achieve closer cooperation became much stronger after the Second World War, especially among the white population. The enormous growth of the copper industry in Northern Rhodesia indicated the economic advantages of this move, while political consolidation would enable the whites to deal with the rising nationalist aspirations of the blacks. Added to this, the metropolitan government recognised the opportunity of applying its policy of multiracial partnership and thwarting the possible expansion of South African influence north of the Limpopo. The Labour government, however, favoured a federation including Nyasaland instead of a simple amalgamation between Northern and Southern Rhodesia. Inclusion of Nyasaland would free Britain from the financial burden of its administration. Blacks in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were vehemently opposed to any form of closer union, while those in Southern Rhodesia were deeply suspicious of the move. In 1950 circumstances began to favour federation when James Griffiths took over control of the Colonial Office from Arthur Creech-Jones and the Korean War broke out. After the Conservative Party returned to power in Britain in the following year, the Federation of

Rhodesia and Nyasaland was established. To placate African opposition, it was decided to review the federation after a period of seven to nine years.

**Black
nation-
alism**

The federation was an initial success, especially in the economic sphere. Black income rose sharply while industrial development and white immigration, especially to Southern Rhodesia, increased significantly. Politicians, however, realised that some positive steps towards black political rights were necessary before the federal revision in 1960 if the goal of a modern state in Central Africa was to be realised. This was emphasised by events in the Gold Coast. Whereas their proposals for constitutional development were aimed at giving the metropolitan government some proof of the development which had taken place, blacks in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland interpreted them as efforts to impose Southern Rhodesian ideas on other parts of the federation. This was unacceptable to the black nationalists and they realised that time was not on their side. Convinced that whites in Southern Rhodesia were shaping their future, nationalists in Nyasaland recalled Hastings Banda to take political control. Soon after his return, politics in Nyasaland changed in favour of the blacks in the federation. Widespread disturbances occurred and strict official measures were enforced to curtail them, including the arrest of Hastings Banda and Kenneth Kaunda in Northern Rhodesia.

**Monck-
ton
Com-
mission**

The anti-riot measures were an effort to play down the nationalist position, but the British government, by then under increasing pressure after the Suez debacle and its position in East Africa, came to a different conclusion and took steps which led eventually to the demise of the federation. The home government undertook its own investigation into the Nyasaland riots and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan went on his famous 'wind of change' tour of the continent. Macmillan wanted to embark on a different course with the federation before the federal review took place, and after his visit he sent the Monckton Commission there to establish the amount of support that the federation had among the blacks. Banda was released from prison to testify before this commission, and Nyasaland received a new constitution giving the blacks a majority of the seats even before the Monckton Commission published its findings.

**Seces-
sion**

This affected the position of the two Rhodesias since it opened the way for secession. Southern Rhodesia and the British government agreed upon a new constitution in which London sacrificed its reserve powers, and in 1961 the Rhodesian whites accepted an electoral formula which recognised the black claim to the franchise when they possessed the necessary educational and property qualifications. In 1962 Northern Rhodesia received a constitution based on the pattern of Nyasaland. With black majorities governing both of these colonies, they opted for complete independence and left the federation.

**Rhodes-
ian
Front**

Southern Rhodesian whites expected to be given the same treatment but the colony's most prominent black nationalist leader, Joshua Nkomo, refused to cooperate. His aim was probably to try to prove the 1961 constitution unworkable and thus gain a dispensation similar to those granted to Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. Among the whites a new political party, the Rhodesian Front, came to the fore, led by Winston Field. At the federal dissolution conference, Field claimed treatment similar to that accorded

by the metropolitan government to other ex-members of the defunct federation. This was refused and Anglo-Rhodesian relations entered a period of mutual frustration between the British government and the white Rhodesians.

UDI 1965 Great uncertainty surrounded race relations in Central, East and southern Africa during the early 1960s. White Rhodesians were well aware of developments in Kenya and the former Belgian Congo and believed that as long as the British government had any say in Rhodesia, the colony's blacks would not cooperate with the whites. In a referendum in 1964, the whites expressed themselves in favour of independence. Soon afterwards Winston Field was replaced by Ian Smith whose political stance was much closer to that of the voters. After more fruitless negotiations with Harold Wilson, Britain's Labour premier, Smith cast aside the economic risks of a unilateral declaration of independence and proclaimed Rhodesia independent on 11 November 1965. A storm of indignation was unleashed among Afro-Asians, Western liberals and communists and the African states demanded the use of force to bring Rhodesia's whites to heel.

Economic sanctions Wilson's government had only a small majority at home and he was struggling with serious financial and economic issues. Amidst great problems within the Commonwealth, Wilson instituted economic sanctions through the United Nations, expecting the Rhodesian whites to succumb within a short time. This ploy failed and more negotiations followed, but Wilson wanted a return to the status that existed before the unilateral declaration of independence and insisted on 'no independence before majority rule' (Nibmar) – something the Rhodesian Front refused to accept.

Smith–Muzorewa agreement In 1970 the Conservatives returned to power and submitted all constitutional proposals on the Rhodesian issue to an impartial test conducted by the Pearce Commission. Pearce found that the proposals were unacceptable to most blacks. At the same time, Pearce's visit to Rhodesia enabled Bishop Abel Muzorewa's African National Council to step into the vacuum left by the banishment of other black nationalist political parties. After the Pearce Commission's findings had been published in 1972, the balance of power in southern Africa changed completely, because the Portuguese empire came to an end in 1974. Exclusive negotiations between the British government and Rhodesia's whites came to an end, and in 1976 Smith succumbed to joint South African and United States pressure and accepted the principle of majority rule within two years. An internal settlement was made with Muzorewa, who became prime minister of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia in 1978. This settlement was in accordance with the Nibmar principles, but Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, the two prominent nationalist leaders, rejected this settlement and continued the armed struggle. This became much more intense after 1974, when the disappearance of the Portuguese from Mozambique made it easier for freedom fighters to enter Rhodesia from this quarter.

Independence The internal settlement did have some foreign support, including that of Zambia and Mozambique. This convinced Margaret Thatcher, who became Britain's prime minister in 1979, that the political climate favoured a solution of the Rhodesian question if she could obtain Commonwealth support for her moves. The ensuing Lusaka Summit revealed that the Commonwealth was actually against the Smith–Muzorewa agree-

ment, but Thatcher won their support when she agreed to new elections in which the Patriotic Front, the result of a realignment of nationalist leaders in which Nkomo and Mugabo came together, could participate. Commonwealth observers would be allowed to monitor the elections in order to ensure that they were free and fair. It took some time to convince the Patriotic Front to agree, but a ceasefire was eventually called in December 1979. Lord Soames returned as governor of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, and in an election characterised by sporadic violence and mutual accusations of intimidation, Robert Mugabe's Zanu (Patriotic Front) won an unexpected victory. He won because his was the only party which could bring an end to the war and he alone promised the black voters a complete review of land allocation. Rhodesia became an independent republic on 18 April 1980.

FRANCE AND THE AFRICANS AFTER SUEZ

**De
Gaulle
and the
Com-
mu-
nauté**

Although the Loi Cadre of 1956 laid the foundation for the dissolution of the French empire in black Africa, it was General Charles de Gaulle's return to politics in 1958 that set the most dramatic changes into motion. He was asked to take over the reins and solve France's grave domestic problems and agreed on condition that the new constitution was formulated in such a way that he would have power to handle any crisis by himself. Since the 1940s De Gaulle's views on colonialism had evolved considerably,¹⁷ and after his leadership had been approved, the Fifth Republic and the French Community or Communauté, in which overseas territories could be included as autonomous members or independent republics, came into existence. One of the main characteristics of this arrangement was the prominence of the federal principle, and in September 1958 the African territories were allowed to decide their future in a referendum in which they were given three choices. The first was to retain the status quo, that is the continuation of integration or association which meant that they could remain overseas départements or territories. Second, they could become independent member states of the French Communauté, either singly or in groups, and the third option was complete independence which implied the end of all French assistance. On a visit to Africa, De Gaulle declared in Guinea that 'independence is available to Guinea, she can have it; she can have it on 28 September by saying "no" to the proposition that is put to her, and in saying this I guarantee that Paris will raise no obstacle to it'.¹⁸

Guinea Of all the colonies in French black Africa, only Guinea exercised the latter choice, and on 2 October 1958 the colony was declared an independent republic with Sékou Touré as its first president. The French withdrew all their personnel and services from the country. This was an obvious bid to demonstrate the significance of the connection with the mother country as an example to the other colonies. Guinea did not repair the breach with France immediately and turned to Ghana for aid while the Soviet Union was quick to enter the vacuum the French had left. In December 1958 Guinea was admitted to the United Nations. In 1959 France became convinced that Guinea could survive. France and other Western powers reconsidered their original obligations. The assistance they offered enabled Guinea to loosen its ties with the Soviet Union and other communist powers.

**The
Mali
federation**

In the French Communauté, France was responsible for the defence and foreign relations of the autonomous states. This automatically disqualified them from membership of the United Nations, which in turn detracted from their prestige and status in relation to neighbouring states such as Guinea and Ghana. The Communauté began to lose popularity and Guinea and Ghana, who had united in a federation during 1958, persuaded Senegal, the French Sudan, Dahomey and Upper Volta to join and form the Mali federation. Dahomey and Upper Volta eventually backed out under pressure from France and Félix Houphouët-Boigny. Senegal and the Sudan persisted, and federated in April 1959. They requested France to grant the federation complete independence, but with the retention of technical, financial, economic and military assistance. Although this signified the end of De Gaulle's Communauté, France acceded to the request and the Mali federation became independent in June 1960, while Houphouët-Boigny countered it with a loose federation and economic bloc of his own between the Ivory Coast, Dahomey and Upper Volta. Soon after the initial excitement of independence had died down, Senegal and the Sudan discovered that they did not have much in common and the federation dissolved after a mere two months. It was not long before Houphouët-Boigny also changed his mind and requested full independence, which the French granted in August 1960. In the months that followed, all of the members of the Communauté became independent republics.

**Independence
expands**

In French Equatorial Africa, all of the colonies supported the Communauté in 1958 despite their economic backwardness compared with French West Africa. No agreement on federation was reached before 1960, when these colonies also opted to become independent republics within the French Communauté. French Somaliland and Madagascar, as well as the two trust territories, Togo and Cameroon, followed the same path and eventually became fully independent in 1960.

**Algeria:
provisional
government**

Having to contend with the rebellion in Algeria from 1954 was one of the reasons for the collapse of the Fourth Republic in France.¹⁹ When De Gaulle returned to power in 1958, the French army played an increasingly meaningful role in the territory and was elevated to the position of decision-maker partly as a result of the politically unstable conditions in the mother country – where short-lived governments followed each other with monotonous regularity. To break the impasse, De Gaulle was willing to make concessions, including the abandonment of the colonial system if this would keep Algeria within the structure he envisaged. In June 1958 De Gaulle visited Algeria, and in a masterly political speech²⁰ announced economic reforms, promised full French citizenship to the Muslims and invited the FLN to discussions once they had laid down their arms. This did not have the desired effect and the election that followed failed to reflect the true position. The FLN intensified the struggle and even extended it to France itself, while a provisional government of the Algerian Republic came into existence in Tunisia. It received immediate political recognition from Communist China while money and arms came from other communist countries as well as Tunisia and Morocco. The United Nations made repeated attempts to intervene. Encouraged by this support, the provisional government was prepared to negotiate only for independence. The struggle continued, characterised by increased bloodshed, bomb attacks and cruelty. The Algerian colons also became more extremist and bandied slogans such as 'Algeria

is French'; they were bitterly disappointed when De Gaulle, perceiving that the right to self-determination lay at the heart of the struggle, turned against them in September 1959.

Independence

As in black Africa, De Gaulle gave the Algerians three choices: complete independence, independence as a member of the French Communauté, or integration with the mother country. De Gaulle was aware that the Muslim majority who supported the FLN would choose total independence, but he did not want to recognise the FLN and the provisional government as the only representatives of Algeria. The FLN and the provisional government, on the other hand, did not want other Algerians to have a say, nor were they amenable to the idea of organising Algeria into a federation in which the various population groups or cultures such as the French, the Arabs, the Kabuls and the Mozabites would be protected. The colons believed that De Gaulle was in favour of an integrated, autonomous community in Algeria, and in 1960-1961 they joined some French generals in an unsuccessful bid to overthrow De Gaulle's government. At the same time the people in metropolitan France were becoming unwilling to continue the struggle for Algeria indefinitely. De Gaulle was aware of this when he opened discussions with the provisional government in May 1961, whereupon the secret colon army, the OAS, intensified its activities. By September, De Gaulle had accepted the principle of an independent Algeria and after an agreement had been reached early in 1962, Algeria became independent on 1 July. Now that French interests had been reformulated, those of the colons ceased to matter and it became plain that they could not stay in Algeria. In the short time that it took the French army to depart from the country, the colons streamed back to France, taking as much of their property as they could. France's participation in the European Economic Community, which was partly responsible for diverting its interests from Algeria, eased the movement of these people from one home to another at a time when France prospered economically, and many colons became staunch Gaullists.²¹

THE BELGIAN DEBACLE

Belgian Congo

Between 1945 and 1957 colonial rule in the Belgian Congo was remarkably stable, and until then the Belgian authorities ruled their colony in complete isolation from the rest of the continent. But they were not unaware of seething dissatisfaction among the advancing évolués population that emerged more strongly after the Second World War. Attempts were made to accommodate these people, but these attempts were mostly half-hearted and did not enjoy the support of the whites, who frequently took up the viewpoint: 'no elites, no troubles'.²² The increasing political consciousness of the évolués grew in significance after 1955 when Dr A. J. J. van Bilsen, of the Institute for Overseas Territories at the University of Antwerp, published his *Thirty year plan for the political emancipation of Belgian Africa*. Van Bilsen held that the formation of an elite and the development of people capable of governing the Congo and Ruanda-Urundi was a generation behind those in the British and French territories. He suggested a thirty-year programme for the liberation of these colonies, beginning with representation in legislative bodies and ending in total independence. The Belgian government labelled him

a dangerous revolutionary, but four years later it unexpectedly granted greater freedom to the area, leading to much unrest in the former Belgian colony.

Patrice Lumumba In December Patrice Lumumba attended Nkrumah's All African Peoples' Conference in Accra, where he changed from a moderate politician to a radical one and demanded independence as a right. This was a direct result of Nkrumah's influence, because he had assured Lumumba of the support of the whole of Africa in the Congo's fight for independence. After his return, Lumumba attempted to achieve this goal by adopting Nkrumah's methods. He roused the masses by delivering impassioned speeches, and creating unrest, strikes and disorders in the towns. He was soon joined and supported by Kasavubu. The whole situation was exacerbated by poor economic conditions and unemployment, and in January Congolese sacked European shops and mission schools. The trouble was brought under control in a short time, but Belgian prestige suffered badly and relations between Belgium and the Congolese changed drastically. Belgian attempts to combat the disturbances with legal penalties failed, and pressure applied on them by the United Nations increased, convincing them to reconsider their long-term reform programmes.

Batutsi massacre In many parts of the colony, law and order was on the verge of breakdown, and an extreme state of tension developed in Ruanda-Urundi. The Batutsi, who dominated the region, attempted to protect the social and economic privileges they had attained under German and Belgian rule before the introduction of universal suffrage could destroy their privileged position. Faced with this dilemma, the Belgians switched their support to the Bahutu, but this resulted in a large-scale massacre of the Batutsi – yet another disorder which the Belgians failed to control. The small European country was in a predicament – it was not only unwilling to act but was also incapable of taking effective action. Above all else it feared a repetition of what had happened in Algeria. Early in 1960, while opposition parties in Belgium urged premier Gaston Eyskens's liberal government to grant the Congo independence, it summoned Congolese political leaders to a round-table conference in Ostend. In order to present a united front to the Belgian government, Congolese leaders formed a kind of coalition known as the Abako cartel. However, they encountered no opposition from the colonial masters who were adamant that they would send no more troops to control disorders. Amidst public calls throughout the country backing the decision: 'not a single soldier to Congo',²³ the Belgians announced that the Congo would become an independent state with the main power vested in a central government. Provision was also made for provincial legislative bodies with local ministries for each of the Congo's six provinces.

Mutiny A general election was held in May 1960 resulting in a majority in the central government for Lumumba's Mouvement National Congolais whereas Abako was victorious at local level – an indecisive result. After lengthy negotiations, Lumumba managed to form a government a few days before independence. He became prime minister while Kasavubu, who had failed to form a government earlier, was made president. Independence came on 30 June but disaster set in immediately. At the independence celebrations the Belgian king spoke about the ties that linked the Congo to Belgium, but Lumumba was quick to sever these in a biting attack on the mother country.²⁴ Six days

later the Congolese army, the Force Publique, mutinied and turned upon their Belgian officers and their families. When Belgian troops intervened to protect Europeans and their property, old hatred flared up and the mutineers, joined by some Congolese, avenged themselves upon the whites, especially those in the rural areas, causing many of the whites to leave. Congolese also began to fight each other, and tribal dissensions and separatism came strongly to the fore.

**Katan-
gese
break-
away**

On 11 July Katanga, which had rich mineral deposits, broke away from the Congo because Lumumba was unable to cope with the unwarranted barbarism and the financial chaos and disrupted communications independence brought with it. The United Nations ruled that the Congo was a threat to world peace and authorised the secretary-general to send troops to protect life and property while the Belgian troops withdrew. United Nations intervention made little difference: chaos reigned and the Congo became a flashpoint in the Cold War.

**Ruan-
da-
Urundi**

While chaos prevailed in the Congo, tension in Ruanda-Urundi also heightened. Attempts to unite the Batutsi and Bahutu into one state failed and they became separately independent under United Nations supervision in 1962. Ruanda became a republic when the Batutsi monarchy was overthrown in a bloodbath of violence. The harassment of the Batutsi became even worse, resulting in a refugee problem in neighbouring countries.

THE DEMISE OF THE PORTUGUESE EMPIRE

In contrast to Britain, France and Belgium, who loosened their ties with their African colonies from about 1955, Portugal tightened its hold on its African possessions. In June 1951 these territories were formally declared overseas provinces bound both to the motherland and to the Lusitanian culture by Portugal's centuries-old policy of assimilation in which racial differences were non-existent.²⁵ Until the end of the 1960s Portugal was willing to challenge and resist colonial and international demands for the independence of its colonies and to pay the price for this attitude.²⁶ This policy gave rise to the view that Portugal could not decolonise because it could not afford to do so economically.

**Tighter
Portu-
guese
hold**

From 1928, when Antonio de Salazar came to power, Portugal's economy remained isolated from the modernising influences that evolved from the depression, World War II and the reconstruction which occurred in other parts of Europe. Spain, another dictatorship, acted as a political barrier between Portugal and these influences. But while the stagnating Portuguese domestic economy was largely dependent on Europe's economy, Portugal turned to Africa and cultivated its African colonies. Portugal practised formal control here because it was too weak to consider any form of indirect rule. In the 1950s the long-expected migration of Portuguese citizens to the colonies began. The influx of whites into its African colonies and the steady build-up of its armed forces at home strengthened the mother country's position – something which the indigenous population was powerless to prevent. Rebellion failed in the early sixties and intensive security isolated the nationalist leaders from the people. This satisfied the Portuguese

political and business sectors while the country's Nato allies were not seriously concerned about its African policy. In fact, it served their purposes well by combating possible communist penetration into those parts of Africa.

**AFM
coup**

In the seventies this complacency changed as Portugal began to experience more serious opposition in the colonies. As the indigenous population became aware that independence was passing them by, the liberation movements found it easier to recruit people to support their fight for freedom. The struggle was intensified by the provision of improved armaments from the Soviet Union, East Germany and Cuba: the Warsaw Pact's bid to outdo the United States in the struggle for global domination. Portugal's sources were stretched to the limit and by 1974 its ability to withstand this pressure began to falter. In Lisbon, junior and middle ranking officers were no longer willing to be part of a war they knew they could not possibly win, and leading economists lost faith in the value of the colonies. They started looking at the European Economic Community, which opened its doors to Britain, Ireland and Denmark in 1972. Spain was also beginning to move in that direction. It was essential that Portugal follow the same course, and when the Armed Forces Movement (AFM) staged a coup in April 1974, the old Salazar-Caetano regime was shelved without a drop of blood being shed.

**The Lu-
sitania
idea
fails**

But the AFM was divided about the future of the colonies. Some of its officers preferred an immediate settlement with the nationalists, while others felt that an arrangement should be found which would guarantee metropolitan assets in the colonies. The leader of the coup, Alphonso de Spínola, preferred a Lusitanian federation similar to the French Communauté of the late 1950s, but Portugal lacked both the credibility and the power to institute such a settlement. Conditions in Portugal's African colonies differed too radically for Spínola to implement his Lusitanian idea, and he finally decided to take these divergent conditions into account. In Portuguese Guinea the military situation favoured the nationalists and the colony's economy was very shaky. The Republic of Guinea-Bissau, which had been set up in 1973, was therefore recognised in September 1974. In Mozambique, Frelimo was firmly in control and this movement was unwilling to negotiate anything other than independence. They disclaimed any aggressive intentions against whites, who had already started leaving the colony, and Lisbon backed down on its undertakings towards the whites and negotiated Mozambique's independence with Samora Machel, the leader of Frelimo. Independence was declared in June 1975.

Angola

Angola presented a different problem. The colony was rich in minerals and had strategic significance. At the same time, the lack of unity and agreement among its three liberation movements complicated the situation. Portugal realised that it could not leave Angola as it had done in its other African colonies. To do so would have created a situation unfavourable to its Western allies, who had a definite interest in a stable Angola, free from foreign interference and influence. De Spínola thought in terms of a settlement in which the Marxist-oriented MPLA's (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola) influence would be balanced by the other two liberation movements, the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FLNA) and Unita, who had Nato contacts. Spínola came to an agreement with them that independence would be granted in

November 1975, followed by a free and fair election and the withdrawal of Portuguese troops in March 1976. This arrangement made no provision for the whites, who began to leave the country in a manner reminiscent of the Algerian exodus in 1962. This left the new state without suitable administrators who could provide the essential services for its future independence.

White exodus The white exodus was accelerated when it became obvious that the liberation movements were preparing for war – a move which made the agreement between the liberation movements and the Portuguese government a mere farce. This was borne out by the serious clashes that occurred among the liberation movements in March 1975. The only action taken by the Portuguese armed forces was to enable the whites to leave the country safely. In effect, Portugal signalled to its Western allies that it was unable to handle the situation and that they would have to participate in order to prevent Angola's independence from ending in a disaster for the Western world.

American intervention At this stage Portugal's role in Angola's independence struggle came to an end and the United States stepped in. Their secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, was determined to prevent the MPLA from taking control in Angola. His solution was American–South African cooperation. The rapid disintegration of Portugal's presence soon necessitated military intervention and this commenced in October, involving an American-financed force from Zaïre. The South Africans soon followed and, in cooperation with the FNLA and Unita, they aimed to break MPLA strongholds around Luanda. This resulted in massive Cuban retaliation, whereupon the military stakes grew higher than the nervous Americans could tolerate and the superpower reneged on its commitments. South Africa could not impose any settlement without United States backing and withdrew early in 1976. The MPLA and the Cuban interlopers became Angola's new masters whereas the FLNA and Unita remained in power in regions where they had been based before the demise of Portuguese colonial rule. Under these circumstances, Angola did not attain independence but became the theatre of regional, national and international conflict that continued into the early 1990s.

THE INDEPENDENCE OF NAMIBIA

Namibia The loss of Portuguese Angola changed the South African attitude towards South West Africa. From the inception of the United Nations, South Africa had stubbornly refused to sign a trusteeship agreement with the world body. The Union government wanted to incorporate the region into its fold as a fifth province and pointed out that of the population it had consulted, 208 850 were in favour of such a move and only 33 520, about 11 per cent (most of whom were Herero) opposed the idea.²⁷ This ran contrary to the general feeling at the United Nations, where India and the Soviet Union questioned the validity of the survey. When the National Party came to power in 1948, South Africa's attitude hardened and preparations were made to incorporate South West Africa into the Union in 1949. An impasse set in because the International Court of Justice ruled that South Africa was under no obligation to sign a trusteeship agreement and the United Nations had no specific power to change the position either. Efforts to settle the affair between South Africa, Britain, France and the United States failed to

produce the desired result. Negotiations continued until Ethiopia and Liberia, the only African members of the League of Nations, took South Africa to the International Court of Justice in 1960 for alleged breaches of its obligations under the mandatory agreement. Six years elapsed before the Court ruled in South Africa's favour whereupon the United Nations established a council for South West Africa to ensure South Africa's withdrawal. On 12 June 1968 the world body changed the territory's name to Namibia.

Swapo Meanwhile two liberation movements, the Ovambo-based South West African People's Organisation (Swapo) and the South West African National Union (Swanu), with Herero support, came into existence. Swapo, with communist aid, turned to terrorism, while the Security Council of the United Nations began to busy itself with the territory. After another World Court hearing in 1971, which this time went against South Africa, Swapo was recognised as the sole representative of the people of the country. The armed conflict accelerated as South Africa tried to organise the region in accordance with its policy of separate development. The Angolan crisis of 1974 inflamed the situation even more. South Africa's position was deteriorating because it had to deal with escalating terrorism and the growing instability in Angola. The idea of Namibia as a fifth province was dropped, and the inhabitants were informed that they were free to decide their own political future.

Turn-halle conference South Africa and the United Nations officials were moving closer to one another – particularly with regard to South West Africa's multicultural and multi-ethnic composition. This was in sharp contrast with the official United Nations and Swapo view of a monolithic country of which Swapo was the sole representative. Despite opposition, South Africa managed to stage a constitutional conference at the Turnhalle in Windhoek. Although the United Nations rejected these initiatives in advance, South Africa began to comply with demands set by the United Nations even before the Turnhalle commenced. These attempts enjoyed the support of the United States, who wanted to improve the poor image the Angola fiasco had given it in the eyes of the African states.²⁸

US policy The United States' policy towards South Africa changed when Ronald Reagan became president in 1981. He believed that all Third World problems were a result of an expansionist Soviet drive and allotted South Africa a specific place in combating this. This eased the pressure on South Africa as far as South West Africa and Angola were concerned. South Africa was always ready to re-intervene if it felt that the position in South West Africa was threatened by the Cubans or the Angolan and Swapo's armed forces. To solve this, Reagan linked a South African withdrawal from South West Africa to Cuban withdrawal from Angola. This eventuality was highly unlikely because the MPLA could not survive against Unita without this support. A stalemate was the outcome.²⁹

Withdrawal During the eighties the Soviet Union, experiencing increasing domestic problems, opted for political solutions to regional conflicts such as the South West African and Angolan questions. This did not prevent a more assertive policy after 1987 when Mikhail Gorbachev made direct contact with Swapo. His approach encouraged the movement to such an extent that it declared that the independence of South West Africa

was possible only through armed conflict – despite the fact that in the decade prior to this the South African forces had virtually wiped out Swapo's forces. Gorbachev, then at the height of his power, launched a massive military onslaught with elite Cuban troops. The military status quo in the region changed dramatically before it eventually became apparent that the Soviets had begun to reduce their military commitments.³⁰ South Africa's military dominance was wiped out and although South West Africa was not directly threatened by a Cuban invasion, South Africa was obliged to become far more accommodating at the negotiating table. In November 1988 South Africa agreed to withdraw from South West Africa while the Cubans undertook to do so from Angola.³¹ South Africa also agreed to come to terms with Swapo and the United Nations over the independence of South West Africa. Under strong United Nations supervision, Namibia became independent on 21 March 1990, almost half a century after the Western Allies had restored the independence of Ethiopia in 1941.

Notes

- 1 K. Irvine, *The rise of the coloured races*, p. 592.
- 2 R. F. Holland, *European decolonization, 1918–1981: An introductory survey*, p. 129.
- 3 J. Hatch, *A history of post-war Africa*, p. 149.
- 4 P. Mansfield, *A history of the Middle East*, p. 240.
- 5 K. Wheelock, 'Coups and consolidation', in P. J. M. Mc Ewan, *Twentieth-century Africa*, p. 171, and Irvine, *The rise of the coloured races*, pp. 560–561.
- 6 As quoted by W. Knapp, *Tunisia*, p. 135.
- 7 R. Oliver & A. Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 242.
- 8 R. M. Brace, *Morocco Algeria Tunisia*, p. 112.
- 9 I. Geiss, *The Pan-African movement: A history of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe and Africa*, p. 355.
- 10 Geiss, *The Pan-African movement*, p. 404.
- 11 Irvine, *The rise of the coloured races*, p. 546.
- 12 Geiss, *The Pan-African movement*, p. 407.
- 13 D. Birmingham, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 8.
- 14 F. Ansprenger, *The dissolution of the colonial empires*, p. 211.
- 15 M. McCauley, *Nikita Khrushchev*, p. 65.
- 16 R. Hallett, *Africa since 1875*, p. 344.
- 17 J. Jackson, *Charles de Gaulle*, pp. 129–130.
- 18 Quoted in Irvine, *The rise of the coloured races*, p. 591.
- 19 Jackson, *Charles de Gaulle*, p. 46.
- 20 H. Grimal, *Decolonization: The British, French, Dutch and Belgian empires, 1919–1963*, p. 388.

- 21 Holland, *European decolonization*, p. 174.
- 22 Grimal, *Decolonization*, p. 328.
- 23 Oliver & Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 253.
- 24 R. Anstey, *King Leopold's legacy: The Congo under Belgian rule, 1908–1960*, p. 260.
- 25 Ansprenger, *The dissolution of the colonial empires*, p. 268.
- 26 Holland, *European decolonization*, p. 293.
- 27 A. P. J. van Rensburg, *Afrika-verskeidenheid*, p. 296.
- 28 Z. Laïdi, *The superpowers and Africa: The constraints of a rivalry, 1960–1990*, p. 107.
- 29 R. E. Clute, 'The American–Soviet confrontation in Africa: Its impact on the politics of Africa', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, XXIV(3 & 4), 1989, pp. 163 and 167.
- 30 R. Oliver, *The African experience*, p. 263.
- 31 P. Vanneman, *Soviet strategy in southern Africa: Gorbachev's pragmatic approach*, pp. 37–38 and 44.



Independent Africa

**Af-
fluence
fails to
materi-
alise**

During the decolonisation process, nationalist leaders promised the masses who supported their campaigns an end to misery and suffering once their colonial masters were gone. In the words of Kwame Nkrumah, corrupting a biblical text, Africans first seeking the earthly kingdom would receive everything they desired following the coming of 'uhuru' or freedom. Three decades of political freedom have proved that these claims were hollow, especially with regard to black Africa. Conditions in independent Africa are condemned by African as well as non-African critics. In 1984 the Nigerian historian J. U. J. Asiegbu contrasted the 'patriotism and probity, ... self discipline and other remarkable ideals of public responsibility with the bad and dishonest example ..., the criminal wastage, the fraudulent and selfish mismanagement of the continent's resources by the new "predatory elites" in post colonial Africa'.¹ Another critic pointed to the fact that 'gone is the enthusiasm of the first years of independence; in its stead are frustration and indolence. Mass electoral participation in Africa has neither given the masses significant amounts of practical power nor allowed them to dictate to the elite. And voting has certainly not increased their material well-being.'² Implicit in these quotations is the fact that democracy as demanded by nationalist leaders has failed, and the frequently expressed maxim that good government is no substitute for self-government³ did not materialise in the economic affluence so dearly anticipated from 'uhuru'.



Independent Africa

Consequences of colonialism Critics have often blamed Africa's colonial legacy of underdevelopment for the continent's misery. Although a black historian once typified the colonial period as merely 'an episode in African history',⁴ this short period in the continent's age-old history was one of dramatic change and the leaders of independent Africa undoubtedly had to struggle with the consequences of colonialism. The large number of small states that existed in pre-colonial times was reduced to 46 countries with arbitrary political boundaries which did not give due consideration to the ethnic differences within the continent. Some of these states are very small, others are landlocked and isolated from any trading outlet. Railway lines, roads, bridges and mines appeared. Cities developed – often with a character different from that of the continent's traditional cities. The people of Africa underwent changes too. Christianity and Marxism made their appearance, and Islam expanded its influence. The languages of the European conquerors became the lingua franca. Detribalisation occurred, particularly in the new urban environment, bringing new lifestyles that vied with traditional tribal and ethnic loyalties. These did not disappear fully, however. Though affected by alien influences, tribal loyalties often persisted, and some caused conflict in independent Africa.

Economic changes Economically the continent underwent perhaps its greatest change: the small locally oriented pre-colonial economies were slowly integrated into the international, capitalist-dominated economic system. But independent Africa had to deal with capitalist as well as non-capitalist power blocks. This placed the continent into a difficult position – one which it was not suitably equipped to handle.⁵

Neo-colonialism As part of the international world, African leaders were not in the same position as their pre-colonial forefathers had been. They were not free to determine the continent's economic future without foreign influence. Instead, one of the great challenges of independence was to advance the continent towards full-scale economic independence compatible with the political sovereignty most of them had obtained in the 1960s. Seen in this light, sovereignty was merely the start of the independence process.⁶ Africa's sudden exposure to the harsh, unfriendly world of economic self-interest and its involvement in the ideological struggle between East and West gave rise to the criticism of neo-colonialism, aimed mainly at the West. As defined by Nkrumah, a neo-colonial state received 'all the outward trappings of international sovereignty [but] in reality its economic system and thus its political policy [was] directed from outside'.⁷ The independence so readily granted by the colonial powers when they scrambled for Africa, in this view, was a mere sham.

THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGE

Expectations of prosperity Despite Africa's growth rate in the 1950s being higher than that of South Asia and Latin America in the same decade, the utopian expectations of wealth and prosperity created by African nationalist leaders had no precedent in economic history elsewhere in the world. After independence in the 1960s, Africa's average per capita growth rate declined from 2,4 per cent to 2,2 per cent. Although this rose again during the first half of the 1970s,⁸ economic realities in Africa did not underwrite the continent's aspirations of prosperity.

Problems of market economies

At the time of independence, the economies of the individual states were small and oriented mainly towards subsistence agriculture. Seventy per cent of black Africa's population lived on the land and only a small proportion formed a market-oriented sector. These market-type economies were concentrated mostly along the West African coastline, while there was also some production for world markets from blacks in Uganda. In East, Central and southern Africa, both agriculture and mining were in European hands. The export commodities produced by these states were for the most part limited to one or two products – depending on the fluctuation of prices on world markets. Some of the newly independent countries lacked export commodities of any significance,⁹ and efforts to expand the variety of commodities produced for foreign markets were unsuccessful because of the lack of expertise in cultivation and in increasing their production.¹⁰

Bureaucratic control

This situation put Africa's initial prosperity, as reflected in the quoted per capita growth rates, in a poor light. In the aftermath of independence, and because of advice from visiting foreign experts, most African leaders settled for some kind of socialist or semi-socialist solution for future economic policy. In Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Ethiopia (after the fall of Haile Selassie) the Marxist-Leninist form of socialism was favoured, while states such as Ghana, Guinea and Tanzania were more selective, taking only what suited them from the various forms of socialism. Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire (the Ivory Coast) and Zaïre opted for a more capitalist approach. Whatever their ideological standpoint, the difference between the socialist and capitalist inclined states was more in name than in substance. In countries where the capitalist philosophy was favoured, governments retained considerable control over the economy. Houphouët-Boigny, Kenyatta and Mobutu Sese Seko all made use of one-party-state propaganda, a large bureaucracy and strict security to establish the economic development plans they preferred. In the nominally socialist states there was also a large class of bureaucrats with power to make financial loans and invest money in real estate and business undertakings.¹¹

Sources of economic growth

Whatever the ideological preference of Africa's individual states, economic policy was based on the small market-oriented agricultural sector for the realisation of economic growth. African rulers wanted an increasing share in world trade and progressive industrial development, because it was obvious that this was the foundation of the economic prosperity of South Africa, the continent's strongest economic power, and the relatively prosperous Arab countries north of the Sahara. But Africa is a continent of extremes. Much of its potential wealth comes from about 5 per cent of its total surface – which produces in turn about 85 per cent of its output. The key to the economic wealth of its southern tip and the countries along the Mediterranean is not necessarily valid for tropical Africa.

Economic policy: North Africa

Governments in black Africa began to buy their countries' export crops at prices below those which prevailed on world markets. They then sold these on foreign markets at current world prices. The income derived from this source, added to the income realised from taxes, was then used to finance economic and social development – education, for example, enjoyed high priority in many cases. Housing was also given precedence,

because it was felt that a contented, comfortable urban community was necessary in order to stimulate the desired industrial growth. It was calculated that application of this type of economic programme would lessen the continent's dependence on imports, lead to an improved balance of trade, make the continent less dependent on foreign loans and ease the payment of existing loans. The Arab countries north of the Sahara had the same preference, but the Mediterranean countries were part of the European and Middle Eastern commercial world long before black Africa was drawn into the global economy after partition. This is also true of foreign investment and industrial development. The exception here was Morocco, which remained isolated until 1912, while Libya was the most backward North African state until oil was discovered there in 1960. Egypt struggled with problems of overpopulation and high inflation, as well as the cost of its continued wars with Israel. These prevented Egypt from matching the economic growth rate attained by Tunisia and Algeria.

**Decline
in agri-
cultural
produc-
tivity**

During the 1960s this economic policy met with reasonable success and black Africa enjoyed a growth rate of 3 to 4 per cent – a figure which was even higher in the Arab countries of North Africa. This was not a true reflection of the economic tendencies of the decade. Agriculture, upon which the growth of the other sectors of the economy was based, grew at a mere 1.4 per cent between 1965 and 1967 compared with a growth of 2.6 per cent before about 1950. Per capita production also declined between 1964 and 1968 and the futile efforts to diversify agricultural commodities limited Africa's export crops to cocoa and coffee – which represented 44 per cent of black Africa's exports in 1968.¹² The belief that the agricultural sector had to provide the surpluses necessary for other development created a situation in which farmers were exploited. Governments made them subject to undue control, and marketing boards paid less than current world prices for their crops. Disheartened by this, many returned to mere subsistence farming and a dramatic fall in agricultural productivity set in. This was then followed by smuggling across the borders, resulting in their closure, which prevented the necessary economic cooperation between the African states. Many farmers moved to the cities where they hoped to find better economic prospects and a more comfortable life.

**Declin-
ing
ability
to pro-
duce
food**

The sharp fall in agricultural productivity had a serious effect on Africa's ability to feed its population. During the colonial days Africa could feed itself with ease – its total food imports amounted to only 3 per cent in 1960. In 1980 this figure was 30 per cent while 24 African countries depended on emergency food supplies. Two thirds of Mozambique's imports were foodstuffs, while a country such as Ethiopia was fed almost entirely by Western relief. Incessant wars, coups and the declining condition of roads, railways and bridges all played a role in the decline of Africa's ability to produce food.

**Geo-
graphi-
cal dis-
advan-
tages**

Government policy is not the only factor which contributed to this position. Africa's geography, with few natural harbours and navigable rivers, has impeded the construction and maintenance of communication lines. Climatically it is not highly suited to agriculture. Rainfall is sparse and irregular, and three crippling droughts, in 1973–1974, 1977–1978 and 1982–1984, hit the continent just as it began to experience difficulty in selling products on the international market when the oil crisis set in. Ninety per cent of the continent is subject to climatic disadvantages: 40 per cent is dry or desert land, 40

per cent is savanna and 20 per cent tropical forest. The soil is poor and tends to leach easily, with the resultant loss of organic material and fertility. Less than 7 per cent of Africa's land is arable and capable of yielding regular crop. Locusts and stock and animal diseases affect both plants and animals, and the accepted system of extensive farming, as opposed to intensive farming, is not soundly based.¹³ In the light of all these factors, it is clear that farming deserved far greater sympathy from official circles than it received from African governments and marketing boards. This includes the provision of information on the best methods of producing crops for a market economy and of overcoming the disadvantageous circumstances prevalent in Africa.

**Grow-
ing
bureau-
cracy**

An initial lack of properly trained manpower also contributed to Africa's inability to provide farmers with the necessary guidance which would enable agriculture to fulfil the role assigned to it by the continent's leaders. The Africanisation introduced by the colonial powers after World War II came too late to supply the expertise when independence was granted and most of those who had some education found that it was in areas that did not cater for the post-colonial demand. In a state such as Zaïre, where violence and civil war accompanied the arrival of independence, many whites were frightened off, and in the process the country lost 10 000 civil servants as well as its white settler population. The same happened in the former Portuguese colonies, where doctrinaire Marxism took control and the whites were afraid to stay. In other countries expatriate workers served in the first years after independence: in Zambia this figure was as high as 62 per cent, but it was far less in Nigeria where the total amounted to 13 per cent. With the stricter control introduced by African governments and the preference for socialism, governments tended to take too much upon their own shoulders. Central planning, state corporations, nationalisation and the regulation of the lives of the masses demanded an ever-growing bureaucracy. This resulted in the increase of this sector of society at the rate of between 7 and 8 per cent from the time independence had been granted. Civil servants received high salaries but were incapable of running the country's economy efficiently.

Between 50 and 55 per cent of Africa's working population are in some form of government service and draw about 30 per cent of the continent's national income in the form of salaries: all of which contributes to a negative growth rate. The same tendency applies to the parastatals. Corruption is rife in these unwieldy institutions. The military coup in Nigeria in 1983 was a direct result of corruption, but the military was incapable of stopping officials who issued licences or contracts only in exchange for money or some other favour.¹⁴

**Popula-
tion ex-
plosion**

Another reason for Africa's economic decline and chronic food shortages is the population explosion that set in after independence. While food production increased by only 1 per cent per annum, the population grew at an average of 2.5 to 4 per cent a year in about 1970. This is the highest in the world. The average life expectancy on the continent rose from 39 to 47 years, while the infant death rate dropped from 39 per 1 000 to 25 per 1 000 in the mid-eighties. The population growth stimulated the rate of urbanisation and it is calculated that Africa's urban population doubled between 1960

and 1979 and that more than a fifth of the continent's population lived in towns and cities in 1980.¹⁵

Industrial growth

Accelerated urbanisation did not result in increased industrial development. In many countries independence was disastrous for industrial growth. In Uganda, Zaïre, Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, the confiscation of businesses and the destruction of tools, plants and suburban areas contributed to the breakdown of industry. This tendency was not limited to countries where violence accompanied the independence process. In Ghana, Nkrumah inherited a financially sound country, a model colony in Lord Hailey's words, boasting a robust non-plantation peasant economy. He chose to replace it with strict state control, a one-party dictatorship and excessive regulation: this brought economic decline and political instability which the country has not been able to shake off in the more than two decades since his fall.¹⁶

Growth rate

Although mining grew rapidly in the first years after independence, the continent's share in world trade dwindled. This did not improve during the seventies: economic growth became stagnant with decreasing exports and growth lagged behind other industrial countries between 1962 and 1977.¹⁷ In that stage of Africa's economic history the continent's population was still too small to support sufficient domestic markets even for simple secondary industries. When commodity prices dropped in 1974, Africa was seriously hit and countries such as Zambia and Zaïre, who had prospered as a result of the export of copper, came to the brink of bankruptcy. Black Africa's growth rate fell to 1 per cent in 1976¹⁸ and what growth there was, was absorbed by the population explosion. In 1976 Africa had 7.5 per cent of the world's population but produced only 1.2 per cent of the globe's gross national product. Of the population, 74 per cent was still illiterate compared to 47 per cent in Asia and 57 per cent in Latin America. This decline continued into the eighties. In 1979, 25 of the 39 sub-Saharan states were among the world's poorest. In contrast, the North African oil-producing countries were more prosperous, with Libya topping the list. Its very small population has the highest per capita income in Africa (\$5 000) followed by Algeria with a figure of \$1 800; Morocco and Tunisia with about \$850 each and Egypt with \$500. In sub-Saharan Africa, Gabon, another oil producer, averages \$3 250 and the general growth rate in black Africa of 3 to 4 per cent is behind that of the Arab countries who average between 6 and 8 per cent.¹⁹

Sources of energy

External economic factors had a severe effect on the industrial development African leaders envisaged at the time of independence. Modernisation and industrial development put high demands on the availability of cheap sources of energy. Coal was not available to all the newly independent states – Zimbabwe, Zambia, Morocco, Nigeria and Botswana were the exceptions. Those who tried to generate electricity soon found that it was a capital-intensive undertaking, dependent on transnational corporations and their specific needs for this form of energy. Ghana, Zaïre, and Zambia experienced the outcome of problems related to the generation of this form of energy. Consequently African states preferred petroleum products: a cheap source of energy prior to the 1970s. Then prices began to rise, initially during the Yom Kippur War in 1973 when the Arabs, in their endeavour to bring down the Israeli state, used this as a political weapon

against the West for supporting Israel. Prices increased again as a result of the war between Iraq and Iran which began in 1981, and amounted to a twenty-fold rise in less than a decade, making oil an extremely expensive source of energy.

Inflation In Africa the higher oil price fuelled large-scale inflation. An inflation rate of between 2 and 3 per cent during the sixties increased to 10 per cent in the next decade, and in some cases it rose as high as 30 per cent. Developed countries worldwide were also affected, and those to whom Africa looked as a market for its export products and capital funds were unable to oblige as they had done prior to the oil crises. Inflation also had an effect on Africa's own oil producers, since they had to spend more money to obtain capital and consumer goods from the developed countries. By 1979 there was a depression in world trade at a stage when it was of the utmost importance for African countries to maximise their incomes from the export of primary agricultural and mineral produce in order to secure funds for their own industrial growth and offset the effect of growing food shortages. Prices did not keep pace with inflation when the continent had to spend more and more of its declining earnings to buy food on world markets. With exports declining at about 1.45 per cent per annum, African countries had to spend about 14 per cent of their foreign earnings on food imports and another 14 per cent on fuel.

Foreign loans During the eighties Africa's weakening foreign trade caused an inability to repay its foreign loans. Two thirds of Zaïre's foreign earnings in 1982, for example, was needed to service the costs of loans it made the previous year. Sudan suffered the same fate and the once prosperous Côte d'Ivoire had to use 40 per cent of its foreign income to service its debts. The costs to service Nigeria's foreign debt increased from 10 per cent of its earnings in 1982 to 15 per cent in 1983.²⁰

Lack of accountability for funds It was assumed that foreign aid would cure most of Africa's economic ills. Aid was provided for a wide variety of reasons, including contradicting purposes such as efforts to develop the continent's backward economy, reparation for the real or imagined wrongs of colonisation, to serve as a bulwark against revolution and/or communism, to attract allies, or simply to obtain markets for export goods. In most instances the effect was counterproductive because it strengthened bureaucratic lobbies, promoted unprofitable expenditure, led to the rezoning of money to private bank accounts, etc., and in some cases increased inflation. Foreign aid was not given according to specific planning, and the allocation of funds often went hand in hand with changing political circumstances. Accountability for the use of these funds was often scant or non-existent.²¹

IMF and World Bank Africa's foreign debts remained – in spite of foreign aid. This forced the African countries to approach the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to reschedule these debts. In the process these institutions placed limitations on the economic freedom of many African states. This in turn injured the credit-worthiness of these states at a stage when they were sorely in need of further funds to enable them to keep in pace with the rest of the world. Because the World Bank and the IMF are institutions of the Western capitalist nations, the commitments they demanded from the African states evoked renewed accusations of neo-colonialism and, in the case of

Zambia, for instance, the blame for that country's continuing economic problems was placed squarely on the World Bank and the IMF.²²

Political instability Economically, independent Africa does not offer a very comfortable existence, and the general dissatisfaction of the masses, who expected more from 'uhuru' than they received, created a widespread feeling of pessimism. Relations between the masses and their rulers often soured as dreams and hopes faded. They became disillusioned with their rulers, and the one-party systems that had been introduced resulted in political instability and the increasing role of the military in politics.

THE FATE OF WESTERN DEMOCRACY

Inhibiting factors The granting of political power to the African colonies coincided with the hope that liberal democracy and political stability would pave the way for economic development. Factors such as the lack of real national unity, the continued influence of tribalism or ethnicity and the inability of the African economy to realise the utopian promises the nationalistic leaders had made, changed these hopes into something superficial. Full appreciation of these limitations was absent both among Africa's new leaders and the imperial powers who granted political independence.

Euro-pean-style government In most new states, independence did not bring immediate change. Nationalist leaders replaced the colonial masters, and whites who remained filled some senior posts temporarily in the civil service, education, the army and police. The constitutions granted by the imperial powers showed clearly that the nationalist leaders would simply not accept anything less than the types of systems which functioned in the motherland.²³ English-speaking Africa was granted Westminster-type parliaments and the multiparty system of government with a ruling party and an official opposition. The French, strongly under the influence of the Gaullist example of the day, granted constitutions where a president was both head of state and the head of government. The strongest party, to which the president also belonged, completely dominated the state.²⁴ The capitulating Belgians introduced a constitution to the Congo reflecting their own system: one in which the king reigned, but did not govern. Both the president and the prime minister of the independent Congo enjoyed executive power²⁵ in a system that would have been difficult to implement easily and successfully even in Belgium. With the demise of the Portuguese empire, Marxist-Leninist parties took power in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. They introduced their own forms of government in which a president and central committee of the party which had gained power ruled in a one-party state.

Dissatisfaction The African masses who voted the new nationalist leaders into power expected them to introduce immediate improvements and to provide what they had promised during the election campaigns that preceded the granting of independence. The effect of irresponsible promises, for example the undertaking given by leaders in the Belgian Congo that they would repay all taxes levied during the colonial period, as well as ensuring liberty and plenty,²⁶ became real expectations. The people were not satisfied with the simple replacement of colonial governors with black faces, especially when

they merely occupied the houses of the former colonial masters, drove the same or bigger cars than the imperial masters, made use of the colonial government's servants and used its technical and administrative institutions, its police and its army. But, on the other hand, Africa lacked the resources to satisfy the immediate demands made by radical elements that poverty and ignorance be eradicated. To this type of demand, there was no instant solution and the masses could not get what they desired in the immediate short term. The new governments saw the solution in the extension of education and in some cases more than half of their national revenues were spent in this way. The result was only partially successful. National consciousness grew, but it also stimulated dissatisfaction with rural life which in turn accelerated urbanisation and unemployment. Job opportunities in the cities were limited since industrial growth to provide these could follow only when agriculture provided the necessary funds to finance the development of domestic industries.

One-party state

These circumstances did not favour the constitutional dispensation the former imperial powers had in mind. African rulers became unwilling to submit themselves to regular general elections and regarded Western-style party politics as a luxury they could ill afford. Many were concerned only in the promotion of their own wellbeing. Opposition parties offering real or imagined solutions to the socioeconomic problems Africa experienced became a threat: they might reveal the affluence the governing elite enjoyed while the masses, becoming increasingly alienated from the government, remained poor. For the ruling elite, salvation lay in the one-party state where a single political party represented the whole nation. Such a party could govern without the interference of an opposition that was often based upon tribal or ethnic divisions. The cultural and historical inheritance that backed the multiparty political system in Europe was simply meaningless when introduced into Africa and, what is more, African leaders regarded the one-party system as a modern equivalent of the traditional African form of government. To use Julius Nyerere's simile, African tradition did not set any store by periodic voting in a free election; instead, the people's will was determined by the elders debating under a village tree.²⁷

Preference for African style

The European-oriented constitutions also detracted from the reality of Africa's independence in the eyes of some black leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah. He was looking for something more African when he introduced one-party rule in Ghana. Nkrumah already thought along such lines on the eve of the Gold Coast's independence and in his autobiography, which appeared shortly before Ghana's independence, he stated that freedom required some totalitarian back-up since it could survive only with such discipline.²⁸ To make this change more acceptable to the masses, Nkrumah and Nyerere characterised the one-party state as a national government in the war against poverty – its introduction being a necessary step to move closer to the affluence which nationalist leaders had promised their supporters during the independence campaigns. In Ghana, Nkrumah wanted to build an African socialist state upon the sound colonial economy he inherited from the British. To do this he introduced a virtually one-party state by the end of 1957.

Authoritarianism A one-party state implied that politically neutral civil servants made way for party officials, while other members of the party took command of the police and armed forces. Trade unions were penetrated, and broadcasting and the press were captured to serve the ruling party. In this process most African states became authoritarian, and in the mid-eighties parliaments survived only in Gambia, Kenya, Botswana and Zimbabwe, although there was a strong move towards one-party rule in the latter state. Only Gambia, Kenya and Morocco are able to boast a free press. One-party states also signify extended presidential powers including the right to interfere in the judiciary. Judges who handed down unacceptable verdicts were simply removed. The exceptions to this rule are Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

West Africa The introduction of one-party rule began in earnest in French-speaking West Africa. Some of these states, such as Guinea and the Côte d'Ivoire, were one-party states at the time of independence. In fact the Ivorian leader, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, referred to the RDA as a political movement and not a party in the real sense of the word, since there was no opposition to it during decolonisation. Other West African states followed suit. In Senegal the official opposition, tired of being powerless, amalgamated with Senghor's party six years after independence. The same peaceful move towards this form of government took place in Kenya when Kadu was dissolved in order to unite with Kanu. In these cases the opposition did not necessarily share the view of a national front against poverty but realised that governments were usually more amicable towards friends than towards political enemies. The availability of substantial rewards was often the strongest motive for unification with the governing party. Tanu in Tanzania was the only political party – which meant that it was only a short step away from the one-party system in the former mandated territory.

Military coups The one-party system rang the deathknell for the ideals of liberal democracy as seen through European eyes. In many cases it was the introduction of a system of government by plots and violence because the people surrendered their political rights and became powerless to remove any government whose policies they found unacceptable.²⁹ The army, upon which the politicians relied for support after the introduction of the one-party system, was in a strong position, and could forcibly remove undesirable rulers who were incapable of ensuring popular support for their policies. This triggered off a spate of military coups in Africa. Between 1961 and December 1991 there were 80 violent coups; 23 leaders were killed either in assassinations or executions, while there were also 12 forced resignations or dismissals in Africa.³⁰ In the mid-eighties there were 20 one-party states in Africa and 21 military dictatorships.³¹

THE ARMY AND AFRICAN POLITICS

Growing military prestige In the last days of colonialism, African armies were small and unobtrusive, usually recruited from apolitical or, as one author puts it, 'backward'³² sections of the population. White expatriates commanded these armies while a few blacks, trained in the mother country, became senior officers in the fifties. After independence the politicians enjoyed the loyalty of these commanders as well as that of the police chiefs, but the new rulers and the masses disliked the colonial composition of the armies, feeling that

independent states were entitled to be proud of their own defence forces commanded by their own people. The influence of the army also grew in significance in these years as a result of border disputes between certain states. Outside powers, anxious to form friendly ties with the new states, provided more sophisticated arms which also contributed to the greater prestige of the military in the new states.

**Coups
d'état**

Another important change was accelerated Africanisation, especially in Central Africa. Mutinies that occurred there in the early sixties were aimed at getting improved payment, improved conditions and quicker Africanisation rather than demands to change the governmental systems of the day. The Belgian Congo (Zaire) paved the way, followed by a mutiny in Tanganyika. Similar action soon spread to neighbouring Kenya and Uganda. By the middle of the sixties most African armies were under the control of their own officers, many of whom were trained in the former mother countries. They became part of a small elite group forming a definite *esprit de corps*, a spirit that was lacking in the first years after independence. Some officers developed a distinct political awareness which had a revolutionary potential, fed by their involvement in the discussion of political matters while in training. Knowledge of what others thought of their countries and the grievances that existed also played a role. The armies themselves were politicised by being used against political dissidents within their borders. Also an army career ensured better living conditions which meant that recruitment, the selection of officers and the granting of promotion were political actions. The care with which the old colonial powers had selected the members of their armed forces disappeared and soon it seemed that tribal tensions and loyalties could not be divorced from military affairs – as subsequent developments in Nigeria show. As some officers began to think that they could improve on the performance of the politicians, the temptation to seize power increased. Coups in Africa were relatively easy, since the army was undoubtedly the strongest institution in any African state. In most cases the seizure of a presidential palace, a broadcasting station, an airport and a few arrests sufficed. It was often government cuts in expenditure involving the army, combined with general dissatisfaction, which sparked these coups and this type of action spread like a scourge throughout the continent, especially in black Africa.

Ghana

Nasser's coup in Egypt (1953) was the first military takeover in Africa, and General Ibrahim Abboud intervened in Sudan in 1958. Five years later black Togolese soldiers murdered President Sylvanus Olympio. These were the forerunners and the Ghanaian coup of 1966 sparked off a whole series of military takeovers. With its good natural resources and a relatively well-educated population, Ghana was in a position to handle its own affairs and develop its resources, but Nkrumah soon discovered that it was easier to criticise the existing government than to govern.³³ In 1960 Ghana became a republic in which Nkrumah, as head of state, held extensive powers, including the right to appoint and dismiss civil servants as well as the chief judge. In 1964 the introduction of a one-party state was approved by a referendum. Nkrumah, however, had much wider visions and squandered the country's reserves on expensive prestige projects which failed to generate income and contributed nothing to the welfare of the people. Another shortcoming was corruption; Nkrumah failed to curb the self-interest of many

of his party members. In 1966 the world cocoa price dropped, and this led to a drastic reduction of this essential income; the country's credit economy slumped to a situation of serious debt. Ghanaian troops who were part of the United Nations force in the Congo between 1960 and 1963 became dissatisfied with their role there, and were also critical at having to serve under white commanding officers. They identified their criticism of their position and Nkrumah's policies with the grievances of other Ghanaians. At home the activities of groups of workers disturbed the soldiers and they decided to oust Nkrumah from power while he was on a visit to Beijing. Widespread rejoicing followed the termination of his regime which has been called 'the nightmare of 1957–1966'.³⁴

Deficiencies of military regimes

Military coups were usually followed by radio broadcasts abusing the fallen government and detailing all its wrongs. The new rulers usually lacked any definite exposition of future policy but this did not curb the lofty expectations of the people, ignorant as they often were of the fact that the military regimes were not necessarily equipped for the task they had taken upon themselves. Poverty, inequality, underdevelopment, ethnicity, poor national unity and political instability did not disappear. The technical and administrative skills at the military's disposal were not better than those enjoyed by their predecessors. The military had to depend on the same bureaucracy that served the former governments and had to cope with the same dissatisfied ethnic groups and trade unions. Support from them was less because of conviction than because of hope, and these groups soon lost their enthusiasm for the new regimes.

Dictatorships

After a takeover, the military had various courses it could follow. In some cases the officers retained power despite being incapable of governing. The result was dictatorships which were more corrupt, ruthless and tyrannical than the regimes they replaced – as the people of Uganda would testify to the situation after Idi Amin seized power in 1971. Others shared power with the politicians and some aimed at the reintroduction of civilian government after general elections. This was the case in Ghana. The National Liberation Council, which survived a junior officers' coup in 1967, were bent on the introduction of a new constitution within three years and in 1969 political parties and a legislative assembly were reinstated. Kofi Busia, who was a conservative politician and leader of the opposition to Nkrumah before Ghana became a one-party state, came to power. Busia 'epitomised the opposite of everything'³⁵ Nkrumah had stood for.

Ghana: new democracy

Further coups in Ghana

The new democracy soon ran into numerous difficulties including the empty treasury, drained reserves and a falling cocoa price. All this sparked another coup in 1972. The constitution of 1969 was abolished, and a National Redemption Council held power until it was replaced by a Supreme Military Council in 1975 which planned to change to a civilian government in 1979. Despite this, relations between the new civilian government and the military remained tense and in 1979 dissatisfied officers and civilians seized power once again. Their resolution to reintroduce parliamentary rule was unsuccessful and in December 1981 they concluded that only a "pragmatic revolution" in Ghanaian society could solve the country's problems. A Provisional National Defence Council was introduced under the chairmanship of Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, who led the 1979 coup.

**Coups
in North
Africa**

From the early sixties, Africa was subjected to a vast number of coups. Between 1963 and 1987 there were no fewer than sixty successful coup attempts in black Africa. In North Africa, notably Egypt, coups also took place. Nasser overthrew the king in 1953 and his government survived the stormy and uncertain Middle Eastern politics until his death in 1970. He was succeeded by Anwar el-Sadat, who was killed while still serving as president. In Libya, Muammar el-Qadhafi followed Nasser's example in 1969 and replaced the Libyan monarchy with Arab socialism after his assumption of power. Hassan II of Morocco was the only monarch in North Africa who survived a military coup. Algeria's Ahmad Ben Bella fell victim to a coup in 1965 but after Colonel Houari Boumédiène's death in 1978, succession was orderly. Presidential elections took place regularly until 1991 when the Islamic Salvation Front received unexpected support at the polls. This precipitated a coup, executed three weeks after the election, to prevent the fundamentalist Islamic movement from gaining more influence. The coup failed, and this led to the dramatic murder of President Mohamed Boudiaf on 29 January 1992. The Algerian government obviously misread the radical inclinations of the fundamentalists in the country.³⁷ Habib Bourguiba, the architect of Tunisia's independence, was ousted in a palace revolution in November 1987 – his successor, Ben Ali, held that Bourguiba was too old and senile to continue as president.

**Situ-
ation
south of
the Sa-
hara**

South of the Sahara, some governments remained stable. In Botswana, the Cameroon, Gabun, Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia the transfer of power was orderly, but this does not mean that political violence was completely absent. Tanganyika, Kenya and Gabun all experienced mutinies in 1964 and these were brought under control only by the military intervention of the former colonial powers, Britain and France. Countries attaining independence since 1974, such as Cape Verde, Djibouti, São Tomé and Príncipe, enjoyed stability, whereas Zimbabwe experienced ethnic violence between the Matabele and Shona factions of its population in the years immediately after independence. This did not result in any violent changes of government, however. Angola was ravaged by civil war from 1975 but the MPLA was still in power in 1993. Frelimo in Mozambique, saddled with armed revolt, has managed to remain in power since 1974.

**Tanza-
nia**

The high occurrence of coups sounded a word of warning to the few remaining civilian governments on the continent. They made a variety of reforms, including the reform of their parties, in order to avoid suffering the same fate. In Tanzania, Nyerere withdrew from public life to devote his time to the reorganisation of Tanu. In 1965 he set up a system – a parody of true democracy – where voters could choose between rival candidates all belonging to Tanu. Although no other country was willing to allow this kind of freedom, Nyerere's concession to democracy was very limited, because the principles upon which Tanzania was governed – the issue of socialism embodied in 'ujamaa' – was closed. No discussion or debate of any kind was permitted, nor was there any opportunity to alter or modify the system.³⁸ This contrasts with Malawi, where President Hastings Banda's domineering personality led him towards a one-party state. By 1973 the Malawi Congress Party was completely in his hands. He elects the candidates for the country's national convention and they are expected to comply with the requirements set by him.

THE PROBLEM OF ETHNIC DISUNITY

- Ethnic heterogeneity: Rwanda and Burundi** Ethnic heterogeneity, not always as a result of colonial boundaries, often caused problems. In the densely populated Rwanda and Burundi, the Tutsi pastoralists maintained their dominance over the agriculturally oriented Hutu. After independence, considerable communal violence broke out, but in Rwanda this set in even before independence. The Hutu rose against the Tutsi, and many Tutsi were slaughtered while others found refuge in neighbouring Uganda. After a military takeover in Rwanda in 1973, these fugitives were offered guarantees of safe return to Rwanda. In Burundi the Tutsi monarchy survived until 1966, but under the military regime that followed the fine balance between Tutsi and Hutu was upset and a brutal rebellion broke out in 1972, resulting in the killing of about 100 000 Hutu. Many fled the country before two further coups which occurred in 1976 and 1987.
- Uganda** There was ethnic tension in Uganda between the economically backward and stateless Nilotic societies in the north and the more advanced Bantu kingdoms in the south. The south had a working relationship with the British during the colonial period and maintained this position at the time of independence when a British alliance was formed with the northerner Milton Obote and the Buganda chiefs in the south – a ruling which was a prerequisite for independence. Obote, who led Uganda to independence, became prime minister while the king, or kabaka, of the Buganda was elected president. Obote's position was tenuous as long as the kabaka's kingdom, an independent power base, remained intact. He moved against the kabaka in 1966 and, with a force comprising mainly northerners, drove the kabaka out. A year later Obote acted against the remaining southern kingdoms – moves designed to serve his own personal benefit. His conduct became more arbitrary, and in 1971 the officer who had led the onslaught against the kabaka, Idi Amin, ousted Obote from power. Amin's action enjoyed wide support, but eventually his actions became even more arbitrary and negative than those of Obote. Senseless violence, often undertaken to remove real and imaginary political opponents, became the order of the day. Amin was particularly hostile towards the Asians, the backbone of Uganda's economy, and he drove them out of the country. Uganda became destitute and chaos reigned. Conditions worsened when the army degenerated into disorder in 1978. Amin tried to divert attention from his failure to restore order by invading Tanzania, where Obote and many Ugandan fugitives had found sanctuary. The invasion failed; Amin was overthrown and fled the country while a provisional government took control.
- Milton Obote**
- Nyerere** Nyerere supported Obote and regarded him as Uganda's legitimate ruler, but the Ugandans disagreed among themselves as to what action should be taken. While Tanzanian troops remained in the country, Obote won an election held in 1980 and was reinstated as president. After the withdrawal of the occupational force Uganda fell into disarray and chaos again. Guerrilla bands emerged throughout the country – supposedly in support of some leader or ideology. Obote failed to keep control in a situation where the army and these bands could not be distinguished from one another and in 1985 another northerner, Lieutenant General Tito Okello, intervened and suspended the constitution. A military council became the executive authority.

Museveni Uganda remained in chaos until Yoweri Museveni emerged. Museveni was a guerrilla leader from the west who managed to organise his forces into a disciplined and purposeful force and who had some experience of government as a former minister. By 1986 Museveni managed to defeat his rivals and gain control of Kampala, Uganda's capital.

Sudan To the north of Uganda, Sudan suffered similar problems. Its southern Nilotic population are of the same ethnic origin as Uganda's northern people, and fugitives from both countries often found refuge across the border. This made it easy for them to intervene again in their own countries when it suited them to do so. Another similarity was that the people of the northern Sudan and those in southern Uganda both benefited from political and educational experience. When the parliamentary system ran into difficulties in 1958, General Ibrahim Abboud executed a coup and restored order in the north. He failed to do so in the south, where a rebellion broke out in 1955 after British officials were replaced by Sudanese officials from the north. Because of strikes and unrest in Khartoum, Abboud was forced to return power to civilians in 1964, and they offered the southerners an amnesty. A new attempt at parliamentary rule failed, however, and led to the coup of 1969 in which Jaafar al-Nimeri took power. In 1971 he made himself president.

Nimeri Nimeri tried to solve the southern problem militarily, but after much bloodshed and hostile foreign criticism, especially from Christian churches, he turned to negotiation and in 1972 he agreed to give the south autonomy. This did not change the south's hostility – in fact it became worse when Nimeri decided to replace the British legal system with Islamic law. When this was eventually introduced in 1983, a major rebellion launched by the Sudanese Liberation Movement confined government troops to the major towns. The implementation of Islamic law in the north ran into difficulties too, and forced Nimeri to introduce martial law in 1984 before he was ousted in a coup in 1986. General Swar ad-Dahab intended to reintroduce parliamentary rule, but by 1988 famine, locusts and the endemic civil war in the south posed continuous trouble. He did manage to obtain a reconciliation agreement in November which included a ceasefire, the freezing of the implementation of Islamic law and a constitutional conference. Despite this, political instability grew worse as opponents of the agreement caused unrest in Khartoum, which was already in turmoil as a result of food shortages and rising prices; yet another coup was attempted. Conditions worsened when floods left 1.5 million people homeless. In 1989 a successful coup took place which shattered all hopes of any settlement with the south since the new regime was adamant about the application of Islamic law. Further efforts to rid the country of its government followed but these had disastrous results for the rebels. In 1990 Sudan moved closer to Iraq in the Gulf Crisis. This aroused severe criticism. The country was politically isolated and its problems concerning the south, as well as its enormous foreign debt, remained unsettled. Similar ethnic and religious disunity existed in Chad, and in 1976 the Western Saharans began a struggle for separate status.

THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR

The Nigerian civil war, one of Africa's endemic ethnic wars, broke out in 1967 and drew wide international attention. In contrast to Chad, which is Africa's largest and poorest country, Nigeria has the richest natural resources – especially oil, which went into production in the 1950s. Nigeria is also Africa's most densely populated state.

Federation Nigeria became independent as a constitutional monarchy with a multiparty system based upon the federal principle and became a republic in 1963. The federation consisted of three regions. The north – with a population bigger than the other two areas combined – was ruled in association by the Muslim Fulbe and Hausa. The south of Nigeria was divided into the east, dominated by the Ibo, and the west, where the Yoruba were the strongest group. The multiparty system upon which the federation was built 'meant that one political party – one region, one ethnicity – would always be excluded from office, and by extension from rewards and patronage available at the federal decision making level'.³⁹ The north was the dominant region and no central government could function without its support. In the other regions there were national parties based on ethnic divisions.

Deteriorating political situation The political situation in Nigeria deteriorated as the federal government failed to solve the country's most pressing problems. Politicians opted for the accumulation of personal wealth and power and this led to a decline of political parties with the politicians exploiting the existing ethnic differences for their personal benefit. In the west, voters were warned against the possible rise of an Ibo empire when these people attempted to get a foothold in that region's economy. Antagonism flared even higher when central Nigeria expressed its dislike for the Hausa and the Ibo middlemen while the north and Calabar did not hide their anger towards Ibo clerks. On the Jos minefields three separate, ethnically based trade unions were formed.⁴⁰

Coup d'état The west was closely affected by the deteriorating political position. In this region the central government kept a political party in power which did not enjoy any support from the voters and in 1964 a general strike occurred there involving 750 000 workers. This was provoked by the disillusionment of the workers: the freedom which independence was supposed to mean had not ensued. Meanwhile, dissatisfaction also simmered in the army. Young officers from the eastern region feared that a plot to northernise the army was in the offing and that it was brewed by politicians from the west and the prime minister, Sir Abubakar Tafewa Balewa, who came from the north. On 15 January 1966 a coup, executed simultaneously in all the regions, resulted in the death of the federal prime minister as well as the prime ministers of the north and the west. The army declared its hostility towards corrupt ministers, political profiteers and swindlers, those who sought bribes at every occasion, and the clumsy federal system. Despite the army's strong views against tribalism, the coup coming from the east had definite ethnic and Ibo leanings.

Violence The new military regime, led by an Ibo, General John Aguiyi-Ironsi, wanted to unite Nigeria and eradicate corruption. Military governors were appointed for the country's four regions, and all political parties were abolished in May 1966. These steps stimu-

lated fear among many Nigerians and provoked a sharp reaction in the form of anti-federal demonstrations in the Muslim north. This was followed by widespread violence against Ibos living there and in July 1966 a second army revolt in the north of Yorubaland led to the death of Ironsi. General Yakubu Gowon, a Christian from a small tribe on the north, emerged as leader, but the easterners, who failed to create a united system, feared the threat of growing violence against them. This broke out in September, and 20 000 Ibo living in the north were killed while about a million escaped back to their homeland.

General Gowon's federal structure; outbreak of war Fear of northern dominance in the east convinced this region's military leader, Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwu Ujukwu, not to attend Gowon's proposed constitutional conference. Gowon suggested a federal structure consisting of twelve states in which the large tribes such as the Hausa, the Yoruba and the Ibo would be stripped of their power. Instead the smaller tribes in all the regions would govern. Deadlock seemed obvious, and General Joseph Ankrah of Ghana tried to mediate between Gowon and Ujukwu. This failed to solve any of the major issues, and in March 1967 Ujukwu started to prevent the flow of money to Gowon's central government. Nigeria's oil fields were in the east, but not in Iboland, and Ujukwu's step meant serious financial trouble for Gowon. This apparently did not upset Gowon, and he continued with his constitutional plans. On 27 May 1967 he announced the creation of twelve states, three of them in the east. Ujukwu countered by declaring the east independent as the Republic of Biafra. The central government refused to accept the separation and war broke out. This drew Nigeria into international politics because Britain, who had large investments in the country, and Russia provided the federal forces with arms. Others who sympathised with Biafra supplied the new state with ammunition.

Effects of war Biafra had an enterprising army which gave the new state the initial success before the better arms, larger manpower and a blockade of Biafra began to count against it. About half a million men on each side were involved in the struggle, which not only grew more bitter as time passed, but also caused the death of more than a million people, mostly civilians, who died of famine and disease. The war dragged on until January 1970 before Ujukwu fled, and one of his deputies, Major General Philip Effiong, decided to make peace. Gowon realised that reconstruction and reconciliation were absolutely essential, and he tried to make the Biafrans feel at home in the military and federal governments he created. This was reasonably successful but left many of Nigeria's more pressing problems unresolved. One was weak leadership at the helm and this was the motivation for the coup which General Murtala Mohammed executed in July 1975, ousting Gowon while he was attending an OAU meeting in Uganda.

1975 coup

Coup of 1976 The new military government created seven more states and set a timetable for civilian government before General Muhammed became the victim of another coup in February 1976. The new leader, Lieutenant General Olusegu Obasanyo, a Yoruba, continued with the same programme for civilian government and took further steps to create the desired national unity. At this stage a new factor complicated matters even further. Ethnic differences were joined by class differences in Nigeria's industrial sector and in

1978, on the eve of the country's return to civilian government, tension in the country ran high.

Second republic An executive president stood at the head of Nigeria's second republic, which consisted of 19 states. Five political parties were allowed, and the National Party of Nigeria, lead by a veteran politician, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, emerged victorious in the central government while each of the regional parties were the victors in their heartland. Shagari became president. With the politics of regionalism and ethnicity victorious, the concept of federalism was subjected to a severe test.

Financial crisis The introduction of the federal framework was the first priority in the second republic. The central government depended on the petroleum price for 90 per cent of its revenue. Despite the instability of the price of petroleum, Shagari made large expenditures which depended on income from this source. When the price slumped in April 1982 there was general disillusionment. The federal budget was overextended and a crisis in Nigeria's foreign exchange or valuta caused new panic. Widespread corruption and fiscal malpractices followed Shagari's measures to save financial face in 1982–1983. Nigeria became a debtor nation looking towards the IMF for salvation, while the masses began to suffer hardship. Resentment grew and Muslim-based disturbances occurred in the north. These were suppressed by force. Shagari saw the uprisings as religiously inspired rather than as a outcome of economic deprivation.

Opposition to central government A second challenge for the new republic was the transfer from a British-oriented constitution to an American one. The regional governments opposed federal control over their power, especially that of the National Party of Nigeria. They were unwilling to cut government expenditure or to recognise the existence of an economic crisis and a lack of confidence in the central government developed from 1980. To many, the federal government was seen as a Kaduna-based clique,⁴¹ interested only in safeguarding and maintaining their own positions. Speculation about a one-party state grew as an aura of corruption surrounded the Shagari government.

Another problem was the inability of Shagari to maintain Nigeria's reputation as the giant of black Africa. His dependence on the IMF created the idea that the country was Western-oriented, and his interference in the affairs of Zimbabwe and Angola was overshadowed by the fact that he traded with South Africa. Furthermore, the expulsion in 1983 of more than two million foreigners, mainly from Ghana, Cameroon, Niger and Chad, who had been working on Nigeria's oil fields, poisoned relations with these states.

End of second republic With the approaching 1983 elections, Shagari's position was weak and he experienced massive criticism. Despite this, he was re-elected, but his refusal to acknowledge that the country was experiencing an economic crisis led to his downfall. A coup that was planned in October of that year was executed on the last day of December when Major General Muhammadu Buhari from the Kaduna state took power. As is the case with so many coups in Africa, he referred to the 'psychological and moral damage inflicted on the nation by the violence and malpractices of the 1983 elections'⁴² and Nigeria's second republic came to an end after only four years of unstable existence.

Buhari's regime Buhari's main concern was the country's economic problem. Steps were taken to maintain private undertakings, and attempts were made to postpone the payment of the country's debts to Europe. In September 1984 Buhari failed to get loans from the IMF because of the Fund's strict terms. Efforts to economise, action against malpractices and corrupt politicians, and smuggling with money caused tension. There were accusations that Buhari was biased in favour of northerners. By 1985 it appeared that Buhari did not know how to solve the country's problems while striking medical doctors and students, dissatisfied with the withdrawal of funds for overseas study, added to his headaches. He stubbornly prohibited all discussions on a return to civilian government and continued to expel foreign workers whom he blamed for the country's economic problems. His regime became increasingly dictatorial and sparked Nigeria's seventh coup when Major General Ibrahim Babangida removed him from power on 27 August 1985.

Babangida's regime In contrast to his predecessor, Babangida, who played a prominent role in the Biafran war, did not include any civilians in his government. The regime survived a coup in December 1985, and then announced a return to civilian government, planned for October 1990. Widespread disturbances in the north during 1986–1987 continued to weaken national unity. Babangida joined the Organisation of Islamic Conference, stressing the cultural and religious implications of this step above its political consequences. This was to placate the south who had grave fears concerning the Islamisation of the region. Religious inspired uprisings occurred here and Babangida's government managed to avert a coup in April 1990 in which the dissidents characterised him as being 'drug-baronish, inhumane, sadistic, deceitful, homosexually-centred and unpatriotic'.⁴³ Discussions on the political structure of Nigeria's third republic continued, but the transfer to civilian government was postponed until 1992.

Problems of third republic The country continues to struggle to find a formula for a successful democratic dispensation which can assure national unity and solve the problem of ethnicity. The whole issue is complicated by religious differences, and economic conditions are deteriorating further amidst accusations that Babangida's government has a poor record regarding human rights.

MILITARY DICTATORSHIPS AND THE CONSTRAINTS OF POVERTY

Liberia The coups in Egypt and Libya were the result of the commonly held view that the monarchies were incompetent and too selfish to introduce the modernisation needed to ensure that the ordinary people shared in the country's wealth. The coups that occurred in Liberia and Ethiopia – the two African states that survived the partition – had the same cause. Liberia was a republic from its very existence, but after 1878 the government was manipulated so that power remained in the hands of the Afro-American True Whig Party. Control by this party thus became almost hereditary. During his reign from 1941 to 1971 President William Tubman tried to involve the indigenous population in the government, but his successor, William Tolbert, failed to adapt to the demands and criticism of radicals, who were becoming acutely aware of developments elsewhere in Africa. Dissatisfaction spread to the ranks of the non-commissioned

officers, and during 1980 'a quant-faced master-sergeant [Samuel Doe] ... led a band of junior soldiers into the executive mansion, killing President Tolbert in his bedroom and later publicly executing 13 senior members of his cabinet'.⁴⁴

Doe's regime Doe established a People's Redemption Council, but dissatisfaction continued and eight unsuccessful coup attempts took place in the following eight years. As economic and financial conditions deteriorated, Doe tried to use techniques of subjection and reconciliation in his style of government. By 1989 all of Doe's associates in the 1980 coup had died under dubious circumstances, and the IMF halted all aid because of the non-payment of debts and rank corruption, of which Doe himself was suspected. The United States government continued to support his regime until disturbances led by Charles Taylor, 'a man of uncertain moral standing',⁴⁵ broke out in November 1989 and soon spread throughout the country. The unrest reached Monrovia and widespread atrocities, often committed along ethnic lines, occurred there before the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) intervened by sending a monitoring group to try to end hostilities and introduce an interim government. A multinational military force followed in August 1990 and attempted to impose a ceasefire. Taylor was opposed to this because he suspected it was a Nigerian effort to rob him of his victory and to save Doe. After Doe had been killed outside the headquarters of the monitoring group, his successors and a third group that had split from Taylor agreed to Ecowas's presence in the country. A truce was signed and an interim government was introduced to solve the crisis. Ecowas was left in financial difficulties because it had to fund the military task force and the monitoring group.

Eco-was's intervention

Ethio-pia Until 1974 Ethiopia had one of the oldest monarchies in the world and, with the exception of the years when Fascist Italy had occupied the country (between 1936 and 1941), Haile Selassie had remained in power from 1918. He was aware that feudal Ethiopia was in need of some modernisation and introduced this by means of education and training. In the 1960s and 1970s he experienced difficulties. His attempt to incorporate Eritrea as a province of Ethiopia in 1962 sparked the resistance of the Eritrean Liberation Front and armed conflict erupted in the Ogaden, a region appropriated by Menelik during the partition. The Somali pastoralists had always resented Ethiopian efforts to control their pasture lands. To add to the difficulties, the dry northern parts of Ethiopia began to experience a drought from 1972–1973 and this resulted in famine. Haile Selassie, unwilling to share power and responsibility with the young generation which his modernisation programme had created, failed to solve these problems. From the mid-sixties, resistance to his rule increased among students and workers and by 1974 it spread to the army; young officers executed a coup in which Haile Selassie lost his life and an Armed Forces Co-ordinating Committee seized power. It suspended parliament, abolished the constitution and appointed a Provisional Military Administrative Council known as the Derg. A three-year-long power struggle started between various groups in the Derg, each with its own socialist ideology and armed factions, and many people died in the fighting before Major Mengistu Haile Mariam emerged as leader in 1977.

Unitary state Ethiopia became a republic and while parts of the country experienced a new drought from 1984, the new Worker's Party of Ethiopia, the country's only political party, undertook to compile a constitution. It declared that Ethiopia was a unitary state governed by an elected national assembly. The provinces became autonomous regions. There was resistance in the regions, however, and this increased as liberation movements, most of them Marxist-oriented, rose against Mariam's rule. In 1987 some of these factions considered joining hands against the government, and yet another severe famine hit the country. The government stuck to strict Marxist-Leninist policies and these hampered the famine-relief programmes.

Despite the peace Mariam concluded with Somalia over Ogaden in 1987, the military situation deteriorated. Mariam faced defeat in the civil wars that threatened his regime and internal dissension grew as the famine increased. In May 1989 Mariam averted a coup attempt and declared his willingness to start unconditional peace talks. Soon afterwards he changed his mind and ruled out all possibility of Eritrean independence. More military setbacks followed, and in January 1990 Ethiopia lost control of Massawa, its only outlet to the sea. Mariam abandoned his fourteen-year-long commitment to Marxism-Leninism and began talks with the Eritreans about the reopening of Massawa. Eventually an agreement was reached in December 1990 which allowed food relief to reach both the Ethiopians and the Eritrean rebels – something Mariam had prevented until then. This could not save Mariam, and his military regime was toppled in May 1991. His army was disbanded and the various opposition groups embarked upon efforts to build a democratic state.

AFRICA'S DIVINE PRESIDENTS

Sekou Touré Irrespective of the way in which a number of Africa's leaders came to power, many of them, both civilian and military, adopted the role of divine monarch, presenting themselves as 'fathers of the nation from whom flowed all goodness'.⁴⁶ It was often the role of their assistants to serve their leaders' personal needs to the exclusion of the interests of the state or the country. Some presidents, like Sekou Touré and Julius Nyerere, were very successful in their quest for personal ascendancy, irrespective of their political philosophy. Touré remained in power till his death in 1984, and Nyerere retired in 1986. Touré, a committed Marxist, did not hesitate to use violence against those who, because of party differences or poor living conditions, tried to overthrow his Stalinist dictatorship. Guinea's dependence on Western industrial countries for the sale of its iron ore gradually forced Touré to change some of these attitudes.

Julius Nyerere Nyerere was the great exponent of African socialism. This resulted in his avoidance of industrial development and urbanisation in order to promote 'ujamaa' or socialist agriculture. 'Ujamaa', which he defined in the Arusha Declaration in 1967, entailed the building of small villages based on communal land ownership and promoted agriculture that aimed at self-sufficiency as the basis for nation-building. This fell short in providing a specific direction for the country's economy, causing misunderstanding and often unhappy results. In 1972 only one fifth of Tanzania's population lived in such villages and only 8 per cent of the people had switched to communal farming. The

voluntary aspect of the scheme lost its momentum, and Tanu officials began to enforce the policy. In 'Operation Tanzania', which began in 1977, more than 13 million people were forced into family villages. While Tanzania's population doubled during Nyerere's one-party regime, the country's GNP dropped to a mere \$200 per head in 1980 (which was worse than that of Guinea), while the foreign debts of both these countries increased sharply in the 1970s.

- Senghor** Until his retirement in 1980 the Senegalese president, Léopold Senghor, was not reticent to talk about socialism, but in reality his country was closely related to France and to the powers that had invested money in Senegal since the colonial days. Senghor saw no reason to discontinue ties with France; after all, he was an important exponent of French culture. France remained a significant political, economic and strategic influence in Senegal. Senghor maintained a fine political balance in a country that had lost its significance as federal capital when French West Africa became independent; its economy stagnated and its GNP went into decline from about the 1980s.
- Kaunda** There is an important similarity between Senegal and Zambia, the Central African country, in the sense that Zambia, too, relied heavily upon the West, the biggest investor in its copper industry. From the early seventies Zambia ran into serious economic difficulties as the copper price dropped. Added to this, the landlocked country suffered when political instability in neighbouring countries severed important links with the sea. These difficulties were exacerbated by drought and food shortages. Zambia became a one-party state in 1972 and adopted a policy of 'humanism', a kind of socialism formulated by President Kenneth Kaunda which is very similar to Tanzania's 'ujamaa'.
- Malawi** Some African countries opted for a capitalist economic system, and small, landlocked Malawi was one of them. Very poor and with few natural resources, Malawi, despite the commercial boycott the OAU and many African states introduced against South Africa, openly traded with that country and supplied many labourers for South Africa's mines, as in the days before independence. As time passed, the attitude of Malawi's autocratic president hardened, and he turned down demands for egalitarianism and more rapid Africanisation. By 1970 his government was among the most conservative on the continent, but its economy was strong enough to withstand the economic recession. In 1971 Banda declared himself life president of the country.
- Kenya** Jomo Kenyatta, who governed Kenya between 1964 and his death in 1978, inherited a country where the European and Asian settlers laid the foundation for industrial development. He was adamant that the benefit of this prosperity should be used for the modernisation of the country, but his successor, Daniel arap Moi, failed to maintain this policy. One of the reasons for his failure was the steep increase in the population, which had risen to more than 20 million by the early 1980s.
- Houphouët-Boigny** Félix Houphouët-Boigny turned the Côte d'Ivoire into the richest non-oil-producing country in black Africa during the 1970s. This was a result of his policy of encouraging Western entrepreneurs to develop the country's natural resources: cocoa, coffee and timber. Development in the Côte d'Ivoire overshadowed that of Ghana, but the benefits of the Ivorian economic miracle did not reach the peasants, who made up the majority

of the country's population. Instead cities such as Abidjan, with a substantial white population, prospered, and when the world trade recession set in, prices fell. Drought also forced down production, and the country ended up with the highest foreign debt in Africa, which meant that in 1984 they had to apply to the IMF for a rescheduling of this debt. The question arises: was the price for the Côte d'Ivoire's spectacular growth not too high if only the investors and the urban population reaped the profits?

THE MOVE TOWARDS REDEMOCRATISATION

New dispensation

In the late 1980s there was a powerful movement to reintroduce democracy. Throughout black Africa this was supported by mass demonstrations which favoured a new political dispensation. In this changing political atmosphere, the benevolent one-party rule of leaders such as Kaunda and Houphouët-Boigny and the military regimes both came under pressure. Demands to replace both regimes with executive authorities accountable to elected legislatures were made under democratic banners. The economic decay of Africa was at the heart of many of these demands, and progress was often shored up by Western powers who donated money. The French president, François Mitterrand, hinted at this at the 16th Franco-African summit in June 1990 when he said: 'no democracy without development; no development without democracy.'⁴⁷

Economic decline

The dramatic crumbling of the Marxist-Leninist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union undoubtedly had a major psychological effect on Africa, a continent which not only was at a political dead-end, but was economically bankrupt. Despite the variety of ideological and developmental options that were offered to Africa over the years, the continent was progressively marginalised in the economic sphere, to such an extent that its GNP was less than that of Belgium, a small country whose population is a mere 2 per cent of that of Africa. Africa became incapable of holding a significant share in the world economy or even increasing the existing share; there was also economic backwardness in the sense that Africa even failed to maintain domestic services on a basis that made it possible to cope with the demands of the future.⁴⁸

Youth's new expectations

In the thirty years after independence, Africa's population grew rapidly: in countries such as Kenya it increased by 300 per cent. Urbanisation increased at a similar rate in countries such as Gabon and the Central African Republic. Educational programmes resulted in a much larger pool of educated young people with new expectations – people who were well aware of development elsewhere in the world. They had little respect for those leaders who took control in the first decades after independence and instead formed sophisticated pressure groups with strong foreign links.

Decline of Marxism-Leninism

These conditions meshed with the new international order which was the result of the demise of Marxism-Leninism. The bipolar world and the East–West struggle which had characterised the international scene since 1945 disappeared. In the process Africa was relegated to the position of 'irrelevant international clutter'.⁴⁹ Soviet military and fiscal aid disappeared overnight, and with it went the endemic internal civil conflict that plagued states such as Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia. As Marxism crumbled, the West withdrew from the Third World and the control of certain mineral supplies or

regions (which from the outset had been strategically questionable) lost its urgency. The Eastern European experience and the advantages held out by the European Economic Community for the future have replaced all former Western European interest in Africa. The IMF, which had struggled in vain to help about 30 African countries onto the road towards economic recovery, was completely exasperated with the way in which some of the leaders had behaved. Many had shown themselves to be much more interested in staying in power than in solving their economic problems. The emphasis swung instead to demands that there be better government, less wastage and corruption, more respect for human rights, and a return to a market economy.

French attitude to Africa France led the way in the new approach towards Africa. During the Cold War France had often shielded African states from the demands of the IMF and other world powers,⁵⁰ but when this struggle ended it associated with the IMF and the United States and demanded basic democratic reforms in exchange for continued fiscal aid. France renounced unilaterally any future military involvement in the continent.

Benin Several African leaders reacted in utter disbelief. One francophone leader who tried to escape the reckoning was the ruler of Benin for 17 years, the iron-fisted dictator Mathieu Kerekou. The country is endowed with weak natural resources and, added to this, a bitter rivalry had developed among the people: those in the north were sharply divided from the southerners, who enjoyed a reasonable education. After four coups, Kerekou took power in 1972 and changed the country's name from Dahomey to Benin to suit his style of government and ideology. After sixteen years the country was insolvent and on its knees economically; striking civil servants had not been paid for more than a year. France suggested that Kerekou should step down and that a one-party system similar to the one in the Côte d'Ivoire be introduced. Beninians refused to accept this, and opted for full freedom and democracy. Kerekou was denied a meaningful role in the reform process and in the subsequent presidential election only the electors of his own northern region voted for him.

Côte d'Ivoire When France suggested the introduction of the type of system applied in the Côte d'Ivoire, Ivorian demonstrators in Abidjan rejected the idea. Houphouët-Boigny immediately applied his political finesse by agreeing unreservedly to the demand for multi-party politics and elections for a legislature and a president. By putting the reforms speedily into effect, Houphouët-Boigny caught the opposition on the wrong foot, and when the 26 parties that emerged requested a postponement of the elections, Houphouët-Boigny turned their very arguments against them, saying that the country was impatient to have the elections. The result was a resounding victory for Houphouët-Boigny's Parti démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) while his challenger for the presidency managed to gain only 18.3 per cent of the votes. Gabon experienced a similar metamorphosis, and in an existing democracy such as Senegal, the president invited opposition members to join his cabinet. Others, like the Mali military leader, Moussa Traore, and Zaïre's Mobutu Sese Seko, realised full well that the reforms which were being demanded foreshadowed their political demise. Traore was eventually ousted by his own military, while Mobutu managed to survive until 1993 despite a great deal of internal turmoil in his country.

Zambia Anglophone Africa is not pressurised by London to the same extent as its cousins in francophone Africa. Some leaders tried to ride out the storm, and in Zambia Kaunda saw no relevance for Africa in the events in Eastern Europe. As late as 1990 he argued that 'the circumstances which made us rally behind the one-party system have not changed ... what we have been doing ever since our hard-won independence Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are starting to do only now'.⁵¹ Anglophone Africa held the view that the reforms demanded were possible only through authoritarian policies. In Zambia, Kenya, Malawi, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe the rulers were struggling desperately to remain in power. For Kaunda the writing appeared on the wall in 1987. He tried several political tricks to save face, but urban unrest eventually forced him to yield partially to demands set by the Movement for a Multiparty Democracy. He appointed a commission to prepare the constitution for a plebiscite, but more demonstrations followed before Kaunda finally bowed to the demands and in 1991 he was ousted from power in a general election.

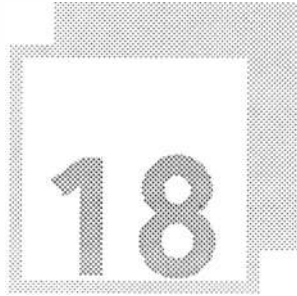
Effect of economic realities Africa's new democratic charter aims at a new dispensation – constitutionally entrenched and guaranteed political life, human and civic freedom, and political accountability with broadly defined market economies. Ironically, an economic revolution is not in the offing as an automatic result of the political changes. This is clearly borne out by the experience of the Côte d'Ivoire where the political changes did not open the way for an economic rebirth. No new capital has materialised (indeed, the outflow has reached new proportions) and many of Abidjan's French residents have left the country. The Côte d'Ivoire remains insolvent despite severe austerity measures and considered defaulting on its debts in mid-1991. Some of Africa's new leaders are acutely aware of the continent's plight – as Zambia's new president, Frederick Chiluba, told Zambians in his first speech in the country's parliament.⁵² In fact, Africa's debts have become one of the main considerations to which the OAU, as will be seen, has turned its attention.

Notes

- 1 J. U. J. Asiegbu, *Nigeria and its British invaders, 1851–1920*, p. xxlx.
- 2 R. B. Collier, *Regimes in tropical Africa: Changing forms of supremacy*, chapter 6, as quoted in P. Duignan & R. H. Jackson, *Politics and government in African states, 1960–1985*, p. 26.
- 3 A. M. Kirk-Greene, 'West Africa: Nigeria and Ghana', in Duignan & Jackson, *Politics and government*, p. 72.
- 4 J. F. A. Ajayi, 'Colonialism: An episode in African history', in L. H. Gann & P. Duignan (eds), *Colonialism in Africa 1870–1960*, vol. 1: *The history and politics of colonialism, 1870–1914*, p. 496.
- 5 R. Oliver & A. Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, pp. 315–317.
- 6 *Africa south of the Sahara, 1976–77*, p. 17.
- 7 A. A. Mazrui & M. Tidy, *Nationalism and the new states in Africa*, p. 32.
- 8 D. K. Fieldhouse, *Black Africa, 1945–80: Economic decolonization and arrested development*, p. 71.
- 9 Mazrui & Tidy, *Nationalism and the new states*, p. 326.

- 10 P. Duignan & R. H. Jackson, *Politics and government in African states, 1960–1985*, p. 12.
- 11 Oliver & Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 330.
- 12 *Africa south of the Sahara, 1976–77*, p. 22.
- 13 Duignan & Jackson, *Politics and government*, p. 8–9.
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 9 and 20, and E. Isichei, *A history of Nigeria*, p. 471.
- 15 R. Oliver & J. D. Fage, *A short history of Africa*, p. 242.
- 16 Duignan & Jackson, *Politics and government*, p. 26.
- 17 Mazrui & Tidy, *Nationalism and the new states*, p. 326.
- 18 *Africa south of the Sahara, 1976–77*, p. 17.
- 19 Oliver & Fage, *A short history of Africa*, pp. 237–238.
- 20 *Ibid.*, pp. 244–245.
- 21 Duignan & Jackson, *Politics and government*, p. 19.
- 22 Oliver & Fage, *A short history of Africa*, p. 244, and H. V. Hodson (ed.), *The annual register: A record of world events, 1987*, p. 273.
- 23 R. Hodder-Williams, *An introduction to the politics of tropical Africa*, p. 113.
- 24 *Africa south of the Sahara, 1976–77*, p. 18.
- 25 *Africa south of the Sahara, 1990*, p. 1058.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 Oliver & Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 324, and Hodder-Williams, *An introduction to the politics*, p. 147.
- 28 Quoted in Oliver & Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 323. See also Hodder-Williams, *An introduction*, p. 113.
- 29 Oliver & Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 324, and Hodder-Williams, *An introduction*, p. 127.
- 30 Africa Institute of South Africa, *Africa at a glance, 1992*, pp. 50–51.
- 31 Duignan & Jackson, *Politics and government*, pp. 21–22, and Oliver & Fage, *A short history of Africa*, p. 247.
- 32 Hodder-Williams, *An introduction*, p. 128.
- 33 D. Birmingham, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 75.
- 34 A. M. Kirk-Greene, 'West Africa: Nigeria and Ghana', in Duignan and Jackson, *Politics and government*, p. 33.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- 36 Fage, *A history of Africa*, p. 516.
- 37 E. Serpa, 'The rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the future of North Africa', in *Africa Insight*, 22(3), 1992, p. 188.
- 38 Hodder-Williams, *An introduction*, p. 126.

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- 39 *Africa south of the Sahara*, 1990, p. 763.
- 40 Isichei, *A history of Nigeria*, p. 469.
- 41 *Africa south of the Sahara*, 1990, p. 769.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 770.
- 43 A. J. Day (ed.), *The annual register 1990: A record of world events 1990*, p. 259.
- 44 *Africa Report*, November/December 1991, p. 14.
- 45 Day, *The annual register 1990*, p. 264.
- 46 Fage, *A history of Africa*, p. 524.
- 47 Day, *The annual register 1990*, p. 422.
- 48 S. Decalo, 'Back to square one: The redemocratization of Africa', *Africa Insight*, 21(3), 1991, p. 154.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 155.
- 50 *Ibid.*, and T. Chafer, 'French African policy: Towards change', *African Affairs*, 91(362), January 1992, pp. 45 and 51.
- 51 *Zambia Daily Mail*, 9 and 15 March 1990, as quoted by Decalo, 'Back to square one', p. 157.
- 52 *Beeld*, 31 Desember 1991.



Pan-Africanism and African unity

Con- cept of unity

African independence had a specific significance for Pan-Africanism. Many nationalist leaders were Pan-Africanists who were strongly inspired by its anti-imperial and anti-colonial stance, and they promoted the movement after independence had opened opportunities for the realisation of their dream of continental unity. African unity was a vague concept, however, and fundamental differences existed among Africa's new leaders on exactly how unity was to be applied in practice. Kwame Nkrumah, Pan-Africanism's strongest supporter, spoke in terms of Pan-African nationalism,¹ and he placed the emphasis on the political unity embodied in a united states of Africa. Others were dubious about such a close form of unity and gave preference to a loose federal structure while a third group favoured a gradual regional form of cooperation which they predicted would eventually end in a more permanent form of unity. The Ivorian leader, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, saw no advantage at all in any kind of political unity: common political institutions were seen as an unnecessary waste because Africa's real need was economic development and aid, something Pan-Africanism and continental unity could not supply.²

THE QUEST FOR UNITY

Conference of Independent African States

Opposition to his ideal did not deter Nkrumah, who advocated Pan-African unity as a guarantee against what he defined as neo-colonialism or the continued economic dominance of Africa by foreign or the former colonial countries. During Ghana's independence celebrations he sounded the opinion of African guests on the possibility of political union on the continent and took the first step in 1958 when he brought a well-known West Indian socialist and Pan-Africanist, George Padmore, to Ghana to act as his advisor on African affairs and to lead the Pan-African movement in Africa. Padmore thereupon organised a Conference of Independent African States in April 1958. He and Nkrumah expected a strong commitment towards African independence and unity from the eight independent states who attended the conference: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Sudan, Liberia, Ethiopia and Ghana. Instead they refrained from any mention of political unity and were satisfied with a vague reference to non-alignment as a base for African foreign policy. Even in Ghana there was doubt about the unity Nkrumah had in mind, as political leaders and civil servants feared the influence it could have had on Ghana's national interests.³ However, the opportunity to discuss world affairs proved attractive and gave the assurance that future meetings would take place. The conference also had another much more important significance: it widened the scope of Pan-Africanism by drawing the Arab states into the fold of a movement that had formerly tended to limit its attention to the Negroes.

All African Peoples' Conference

December 1958 saw a further advance when the All African Peoples' Conference took place in Accra. It was attended by two hundred delegates representing fifty political parties, trade unions and student organisations from all parts of the continent irrespective of their political status. The conference reconfirmed the principles laid down by the Manchester Conference of 1945 and the delegates pledged themselves to a final and co-ordinated assault on colonialism and imperialism, including the use of violence if necessary. Much stronger steps towards African unity were also suggested. These included the regrouping of the continent's independent states by the adjustment of existing 'artificial' borders, the amalgamation or federation of certain areas on a regional basis, and the progressive formation of federations or confederations into an ultimate Pan-African commonwealth and a free and independent united states of Africa. After the delegates heard Nkrumah's opening plea for a strong form of unity such as this, they accepted a resolution asking for the formation of a 'Commonwealth of free African states' and expressed the hope that 'the day will dawn when the first loyalty of African states will be to an African Commonwealth'.⁴ Regional governments controlling five federations of North, West, Central, East and South Africa were suggested and a constitution was adopted providing for an organisation with a permanent secretariat to organise future conferences. A call was also made upon existing independent African states to lead the continent towards the attainment of this goal.⁵

Milestones

These two conferences were milestones in the quest for African unity. They made Pan-Africanism an exclusive African movement, lead by Africans. The movement then definitely entered the sphere of practical politics,⁶ and between 1959 and 1963 various

steps were taken to create some form of unity on the continent. Greater mutual contact between leaders, parties and trade unions made these Pan-African overtures possible.

East Africa: Pafmeca One of the first moves in this direction was a regional one and was made in September 1958, even before the meeting of the All African Peoples' Conference in Accra. East Africans who wanted to liberate their countries from colonialism founded the Pan African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa (Pafmeca). A conference of nationalists from these areas, inspired by Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika, followed immediately after the Accra conference. Delegates from Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika, Nyasaland Northern and Southern Rhodesia considered the promotion of Pan-Africanism and the liberation from colonialism. A Freedom Charter of the peoples of East and Central Africa was drawn up coordinating their actions. Between its inception and 1963, Pafmeca met annually, and in 1960 it contemplated steps to federate Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar.

Guinea-Ghana Union A similar attempt to encourage closer union followed in West Africa after Guinea opted for complete independence from France in 1958. Sekou Touré was a convinced Pan-Africanist and after the financial aid 'rich and jolly' Ghana gave him, he and Nkrumah created the Ghana-Guinea Union on 11 May 1959. With its own flag, anthem and motto, the Union was intended to become the core of the desired union of African states. Membership was open to all independent states and under its motto of 'Independence and Unity' it strove towards a free and progressive union of independent African states.⁸

Sanniquillie Declaration This strong emphasis upon a close political union did not attract all states. President William Tubman of Liberia was one ruler who was dubious about it and after a meeting with Nkrumah and Touré in July 1959, the Sanniquillie Declaration was issued. It laid down the principles for a Community of African states but made no reference to any form of unification. Instead it favoured a kind of commonwealth as base for future unity in which member states would retain their identity and constitutions. It recognised the principle of non-interference in one another's domestic affairs and brought to the fore the problem of the relationship between sovereign states and their position in a unified political framework.

The Ghana-Guinea union failed to develop despite the fact that Mali, formerly the colony of French Sudan, joined them in 1960. Touré attached no specific value to the union and was satisfied with occasional ministerial meetings where nothing was achieved. In practical terms the union had no common frontier, and this made economic cooperation difficult to achieve.⁹ After Nkrumah (1966) and the Malian leader, Modibo Keita (1968), were removed from power, the union practically disappeared.

Parallel conferences: Tunis A series of parallel conferences, held by the independent states and the All African Peoples' group, was another feature of Pan-Africanism in those years. It is thus evident that the movement was divided into moderate and militant groupings and that the two regarded each other with suspicion. The All African Peoples' group held their second congress in Tunis in 1960 and devoted much attention to the political, economic and

cultural aspects of Pan-Africanism. Its revised constitution reaffirmed the ideal of unity and the eventual creation of a united states of Africa.

Addis Ababa Later in the same year, the independent states met in Addis Ababa at a conference that was also open to colonies which were not yet independent but had already set the date to take this step. Nigeria, Somalia and Algeria attended but the French colonies, due for independence later that year, were conspicuous by their absence. This was caused by several factors. In the first place, at that stage their enthusiasm for Pan-Africanism was lukewarm compared with the other states, and they feared that the presence of Algeria, locked in an intense struggle with France, could alienate them from the mother country. Other differences centred on language and the background of their leaders who were all steeped in French culture. The way in which these colonies became independent was significant too. From 1960 they could obtain independence individually with continued economic, technological, military and other aid from France. This was generally preferred to joining the two federal blocs, which formed the core of two larger united francophone states.¹⁰

Differences on unity The independent states all confirmed their opposition towards colonialism, imperialism and racism as well as to the French nuclear tests in the Sahara. They also decided to create an organisation for African economic development and to work towards closer educational, cultural and scientific bonds. Despite this, fundamental differences existed with regard to unity. Ghana and Guinea made a strong case for a political union based upon the Sanniquellie Declaration, but the other delegates were cool about this. Nigeria not only branded the idea 'premature', but warned against leaders who aspired to lead the continent to constitutional unity. This remark was obviously aimed at Nkrumah, who had made himself available for this role during the first All African Peoples' Conference in 1958. Africa's new leaders were clearly unwilling to sacrifice their newly attained political power to anybody.¹¹

Bloc of French-speaking states This paved the way for the appearance of a separate bloc of conservative states on the continent. This bloc was French-speaking and relied on the mother country for their security, capital, skills and markets. It coincided with De Gaulle's preference for keeping English influence out of the European Common Market (ECM) which spilt over into Africa and deepened suspicion towards English-speaking Africa. Nkrumah was increasingly convinced that the former French colonies were mere client states of France and only nominally independent, since he regarded the ECM as an instrument of neo-colonialism. He also opposed their preference for regional groupings, seeing it as a drain on the political power which unity of the continent could bring. Pafmeca became Pafmecsca between 1961 and 1962 when Ethiopia, Somalia, Basutoland, Bechuanaland and black nationalists from South Africa, South West Africa and Swaziland joined the grouping.

Developing force The year 1960 was crucial for Pan-Africanism and the quest for continental unity. The pioneers of this ideal managed a clearer definition of its aims and placed the movement on a better organised footing. Its influence on the continent and in world politics was taking shape, and at the United Nations (UN) it became a power bloc putting Africa's

viewpoint with growing confidence. But the first cracks in its ranks and ostensible unity were also appearing as more states became independent and their rulers disagreed with the pioneers about the interpretation of African unity and the continent's attitude towards the outside world. These dissidents were the thirteen French colonies and Nigeria. Differences between the groups terminated in blocs of states hostile towards each other. Another bone of contention was border disputes, especially between Cameroon and Guinea, Somalia and Ethiopia, Tunisia and Egypt, Togo and Ghana, Nigeria and Ghana, Morocco and Mauritania, and Morocco and Tunisia.

Katanga secession Then came the Congo crisis. The Congolese prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, asked the African states and the UN for aid in ridding the country of the Belgian troops who tried to maintain order in the chaos that followed the granting of independence. The UN obliged and asked African states to make troops available for a task force. This drew these states into the crisis which was worsened when Katanga seceded and resisted efforts to bring it back into the Congolese fold. Lumumba expected greater involvement from the world body, but the UN was hesitant to interfere in the domestic affairs of the country and limited its efforts to helping to rid the Congo of the Belgian troops. A split was also developing between Lumumba and the country's president, Joseph Kasavubu, while Kasavubu and the Katangese leader, Moïse Tshombe, enjoyed the support of some of the French-speaking African states.

Leopoldville Conference All of this contributed to making the situation very difficult for Lumumba. He was a convinced Pan-Africanist and these problems convinced him to organise his own Pan-Africanist conference. This was held in Leopoldville between 25 and 31 August 1960 and immediately created a very delicate situation for the thirteen states that attended. They did not want to antagonise the UN, because they realised that the UN force had to stay in the Congo; on the other hand they did not want to oppose Lumumba. In consequence, they requested Lumumba to cooperate with the UN and confirmed the world body's actions. Katanga was a much harder nut to crack since there was a difference of opinion on how Tshombe's secession was to be handled. Guinea supported Lumumba's demand that Tshombe be deposed, but others were unwilling to commit themselves to such a step. In the end they made no positive suggestions on how to handle the Katangese secession. Uncertainty and mutual differences prevented the independent African states from taking a unified stand. A disillusioned Lumumba then called upon the Soviet Union for aid – a step that put African unity under further pressure because it violated the principle of non-alignment upon which previous Pan-African congresses had laid so much stress. The cracks in Pan-African ranks were widening.

Polarisation Further developments in the Congo worsened the position. The split between Lumumba and Kasavubu proved impossible to heal and they removed each other from power. Meanwhile, the UN occupied the broadcasting station in Leopoldville, using Ghanaian troops and thus preventing Lumumba from addressing the people; Nkrumah took the stance of supporting the Congolese prime minister in public. This was an obvious effort to keep in favour with both parties while the more radical African states, Ghana and Guinea, criticised the UN for not acting against the Katangese secession. At this stage

the army under Colonel Joseph Mobutu intervened and stopped the chaos in the Congo, but his action also widened the gap among the African states. Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Egypt and Morocco did not recognise the new Congolese government and continued their support for Lumumba. When the Congolese government sent the Ghanaian ambassador home and requested the UN to withdraw the Ghanaian and Guinean troops, the polarisation between the pro-Lumumba and anti-Lumumba groups increased.

**The
Brazza-
ville
group**

While these developments were in progress, the thirteen French colonies in black Africa became independent. Although the new states were cool towards Pan-Africanism, they realised the value of greater continental unity and after discussing the Algerian crisis in October 1960, they formed a more permanent organisation to guard their interests. In December of the same year, twelve of the new states met at Brazzaville. The Congo and Algerian crises were reaching serious proportions, and at the Brazzaville meeting the new states expressed their support for the UN's actions in the Congo. On the question of unity they preferred closer African cooperation based upon neighbourliness and unity of culture and interests to the advantage of all. No reference was made to the radical kind of unity Nkrumah propagated. The Brazzaville conference had a special significance: for the first time a conference was held to which only a limited and specific group of states were invited. This resulted in the formation of a bloc – the Brazzaville group, also known as the Union of Africa and Malgassy (UAM) – that stood for a policy of mutual cooperation. Their taking of sides in the Congo crisis contributed to the deepening of the split that existed in Pan-African ranks.

**Casa-
blanca
Con-
ference**

African unity was the loser. The states supporting Lumumba suddenly found themselves in the minority; fearing that they were losing their Pan-African initiatives, they began to cooperate in a bloc which enabled them to put their case more strongly. Morocco took the lead and organised a conference at Casablanca early in January 1961. The heads of states of Ghana, Guinea, Mali and the United Arab Republic (Egypt) attended, as did the foreign minister of Libya and the leader of the provisional government of Algeria. Although the meeting devoted some discussion to imperialism, colonialism and racism, the Congo and continental unity enjoyed its main attention. Nkrumah pleaded strongly for a union of African states, but even within their ranks there was no real support for this kind of unity. Instead, the conference reconfirmed its confidence in the conferences of independent African states which had been held in Accra in 1958 and in Addis Ababa in 1960, calling upon all to cooperate to create political, economic, cultural and military unity as far as this was possible. To this end they decided to form an African Consultative Assembly and four committees dealing with political, economic, and cultural affairs, as well as an African Supreme Command. These were to meet regularly to deal with affairs of common concern.

**African
Charter**

These decisions were embodied in the African Charter of May 1961, which was compiled after another meeting in Cairo and was intended to embody the principles laid down at Casablanca. When it took these steps, the Casablanca group became a formal organisation in a wider Pan-African context. It took the process of bloc formation a step further and formed a group that opposed the Brazzaville group in a specific manner.

However, the other African states did not react to their call for unity, an indication that the Pan-African ideal was very far from realisation and was in danger of disappearing.

Monrovia Conference Africa was divided into two camps with a third group of states, Ethiopia, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo and Tunisia, remaining aloof from the polarisation. These states did not form a third group, but their existence made African unity futile and ludicrous – a situation that moved Léopold Senghor of Senegal to try to convince the two blocs to come to some kind of mutual understanding. A further conference was proposed. Léopold Senghor, President William Tubman of Liberia and Sir Abubakar Tafewa Balewa, the prime minister of Nigeria, arranged the preliminaries with the support of six other states. Two of these, Cameroon and the Côte d'Ivoire (belonging to the Brazzaville group), and two others, Guinea and Mali (from the Casablanca group), cooperated with Liberia and Nigeria to sponsor the meeting. Eventually twenty states gathered in Monrovia. Shortly before the meeting opened on 8 May 1961, Ghana, Guinea and Mali withdrew, ostensibly dissatisfied with the arrangements, while Morocco and Egypt refused the invitation. Sudan withdrew in support of Morocco's objection to the presence of Mauritania, while the Congo, the source of the quarrel between the two blocs, was not invited, signifying that the Casablanca group were boycotting the conference.¹³

Principles In spite of this, the Monrovia Conference was the biggest meeting of African states since 1958, and French- and English-speaking states met for the first time to discuss general affairs. The main speakers all stressed some aspect of the unity that Africa desired and needed. Tubman emphasised economic cooperation, Senghor stressed cultural, technical and economic instead of political unity, while Milton Margai of Sierra Leone pleaded for a unity that preserved the territorial integrity of each state and a free choice of form of government and kept political ideology intact. After lengthy discussion a number of principles, laid down in a joint communique, were accepted. These included the recognition of the absolute equality of all states; the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states; respect for the sovereignty of each state; and the principle that there should be recognition of the inalienable right of each state not only to exist but to develop its own personality and means of resistance to subversive acts by neighbouring states.¹⁴

Lagos Charter The acceptance of the principle of mutual cooperation based upon tolerance, solidarity, good neighbourliness and the periodical exchange of ideas was of special importance. The kind of unity these states preferred excluded any form of political unification or integration of their sovereignty, but aimed instead at the unification of aspirations and acts as far as social solidarity and political identity were concerned. In January 1962 these principles were finalised in the Lagos Charter, which gave birth to the Inter-African Malagasy Organisation (popularly known as Ocam), with various management and administrative organs.

Polarisation of views The year 1962 was one of polarisation on the African continent. The radical Casablanca group wanted to place the continent on the path to socialism, which they saw as the solution to its economic problems. The African personality was to be cultivated in all

walks of life, and the group continued to warn against the dangers of neo-colonialism. The moderate Monrovia group differed on all three these aims and attached much importance to good relations and cooperation with the former colonial powers. The widest and most significant difference, however, concerned the concept of unity. To Monrovia it meant unified aspirations, solidarity and the maintenance of political identity but no political unification on a unitary, federal or regional level. This was the exact opposite of Nkrumah's stance. To him, the future lay in a political union because it held the solution to problems such as poverty, balkanisation, neo-colonialism and mutual aspirations, as well as language and cultural differences. At this stage these differences of approach towards Pan-Africanism resulted in personal quarrels between African leaders. The Nigerian press came out strongly against Nkrumah for his derisive remarks on the Monrovia principles and mocked him for his inability to unite Ghana and Guinea properly. He was accused of seeing himself as a kind of messiah at the head of the whole African continent.

THE FORMATION OF THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

Pro- posed summit

Paradoxically, despite these bitter differences African states had one important thing in common. All of them felt an urge for some kind of continental unity. It was this feeling that changed the direction of events and made 1963 the year of African unity – something which hardly seemed possible when the Lagos Charter was issued. During the Lagos meeting, some African leaders were obviously unhappy about this dissent. Haile Selassie, head of Africa's oldest independent state, regarded the bloc formation as artificial and called upon the continent's leaders to put away their differences and concentrate on affairs upon which they all agreed. He stressed that he belonged to one grouping only: the African grouping. This evoked reaction from both Ghana and Guinea, who made new calls for cooperation among African states. Throughout 1962 serious discussions at diplomatic level took place at the UN, and visits between various African leaders followed, such as between Haile Selassie and Sekou Touré in Asmara on 28 June 1962. The idea of a summit for all heads of African states was born. Ethiopia took the lead in organising this and succeeded in gathering the foreign ministers together to prepare for the proposed summit which was to be held at Addis Ababa early in 1963.

Provi- sional charters

During a preliminary meeting, African foreign ministers worked on compiling an agenda and drafted provisional charters on which the heads of state could deliberate. With the charters of the Monrovia and Casablanca groupings and the ideas of Kwame Nkrumah before them, four perspectives on possible unity crystallised. Libya and Sudan suggested that an African Charter similar to the Declaration of Bandung should be accepted. This would have maintained the position as it had been before the summit. Another group of states favoured the framing of a declaration of principles to create a loose organisation of states within the framework of an African Association, based upon the model of the Organisation of American States. A third grouping regarded such an organic form of unity as premature, and gave preference to economic cooperation which could lead to future unity. Lastly, those who were clearly inspired by Nkrumah

insisted on the formation of a union of African states with its own civil service, supreme military command and high court. This confronted the foreign ministers with unsurmountable obstacles and they opted for the way of least resistance. This entailed the circulation of an Ethiopian concept charter for the comments of the heads of state which they would then reconsider at a later date.¹⁵

**Addis
Ababa
summit**

Thirty heads of state gathered in an euphoric Addis Ababa on 23 May 1963. Only Morocco, in protest against the presence of Mauritania, and Togo, because of the assassination of President Sylvanus Olympus, were absent. Strong leaders such as Nasser, Haile Selassie and even Houphouët-Boigny rejected the foreign ministers' suggestion to refer the Ethiopian concept back to the foreign ministers for further consideration. Opening the summit, Haile Selassie told the delegates that their prime task was the creation of a base for unity and that it was his view that they should talk with one voice and make unilateral decisions when and where necessary. This was possible only in a single organisation from which Africa could talk as an entity and in which Africa itself could find solutions to its problems. To accomplish this was the meeting's prime responsibility to the people of Africa.

**Differ-
ences
of view-
point**

A variety of views were put forward in the subsequent discussion, but opinions once again polarised reflecting the basic difference that had existed since the quest for unity had begun in 1958. Nkrumah pleaded for a union of states and reasoned that socioeconomic development and cooperation were possible only within this type of political framework. He assured the summit that this would not lead to the political union so many feared. Only Uganda stood by Nkrumah – the majority opposed his suggestion. Sir Abubakar Tafewa Balewa said it was much too early for such a union and placed strong emphasis on the independence and sovereignty of each state. Mutual respect for, and acceptance of, each other's sovereignty and equality were prerequisites for unity; this would be possible only through gradual cooperation in the economic, educational, scientific and cultural spheres. He stated that it was essential for the Africans to come to know each other properly before a step as drastic as political unity could be contemplated. The spirit of Casablanca and Monrovia was obviously alive and well.

**New
sense
of soli-
darity**

Then Ben Bella of Algeria steered the meeting on a different course. In an emotional speech he called on the delegates each to die in some small way so that African unity could live. He turned their attention towards decolonisation, which all African states favoured, and he called upon Africa's independent states to cooperate in liberating the rest of the continent from the white minority governments in the south. This inspired the meeting with a sense of solidarity and new spirit. One by one, speakers then began to clarify this as Africa's prime task. South Africa and Portugal became the binding factors: unity was found in joint commitment against colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination. Military and financial aid and boycotts, all aimed at the white south, were suggested, and in this spirit the summit sent the foreign ministers back to draft a charter.

OUA

Concessions were necessary and the Casablanca states accepted defensive aspects such as respect for sovereignty, the condemnation of subversion and non-interference for the

inclusion of non-alignment, anti-colonialism and the absolute priority of liberation in southern Africa.¹⁶ What eventually crystallised was more in accordance with the views of the conservative heads than those of the radical leaders. The Casablanca grouping realised that its view had been rejected and the unity it preferred was undesirable at that stage in the quest for continental unity. They accepted the charter with the promise that closer unification would be discussed at a later stage. On 23 May 1963 the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was born – Africa took a significant step towards the cooperation and unity its leaders so ardently desired, the form of which had been the source of such vastly differing opinions.¹⁷ Since the unity that was created rested upon the principles of decolonisation, anti-apartheid and the desire to have a say in world affairs, it was, as one critic put it, built on the negative act of breaking down forces outside its fold rather than an attempt to consolidate itself from within its own ranks.¹⁸ From a different viewpoint, the OAU is an organisation that aims at the defence of the territorial and political status quo in Africa. Individual sovereignty was the supreme issue. It made the annual assembly of the continent's heads of state of far greater importance than the arbitrary bodies set up to consider health, education, economic and defence matters.¹⁹

THE AIMS, PRINCIPLES AND STRUCTURE OF THE OAU

- Charter** The charter of the OAU is very similar to that of the UN and some of the principles accepted were taken from the UN charter. It recognised the inalienable right of all people to decide on their own future as well as the principle that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are aims that should be pursued if the legitimate aspirations of Africa's peoples are to be realised. Peace and security should be maintained, sovereignty and territorial integrity guaranteed and all forms of neo-colonialism opposed. Member states are pledged to aspire towards mutual understanding and solidarity.
- Aims** Five specific aims were set. The organisation devoted itself to promote unity and solidarity among its members; cooperation was aimed at the improvement of life on the continent; the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the African states were to be protected; all forms of colonialism were to be wiped out; and international cooperation was to be promoted within the context of the charter of the UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To realise these aims, member states undertook to coordinate their policies with regard to the following: politics, diplomacy, economic cooperation including transport and communication, cultural cooperation, the promotion of health, sanitation, feeding, scientific and technical cooperation, defence and security affairs.²⁰ Emphasis was placed on cooperation whereas political unification did not feature at all. With regard to defence matters, Nkrumah's suggestion of an African Supreme Command was also omitted.
- Principles** In article III of the charter, seven principles were laid down to govern relations between member states. This is the key to understanding the essence of the OAU. The article affirmed the following: the sovereign equality of member states; non-intervention in the domestic affairs of member states; respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state as well as the inalienable right of each to independence; peaceful settlement

of differences through negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration; unconditional condemnation of all forms of political assassination and subversive activities to undermine the government of a neighbouring state; absolute devotion to the liberation of regions still struggling for their independence; and non-alignment with regard to international power blocs.²¹

Structure Four main institutions and a number of specialised commissions control the OAU, headed by an Assembly of Heads of State and Governments. The assembly meets once a year, or more often if two thirds of the members, which also constitutes a quorum, consider it necessary. This body determines policy and reviews the decisions taken by the OAU's other organs while its own decisions are sent to Africa's governments in the form of suggestions which cannot be enforced upon member states. No disciplinary action can be taken against any member. Each member has one vote and all decisions except procedural measures require a two-thirds majority. Another function of the assembly is the appointment of the secretariat and some of the specialised committees.

Council of Ministers The Council of Ministers consists of the foreign ministers of the member states. They have two regular meetings a year, but can be summoned more often when relations deteriorate or crises such as border disputes develop. This makes it the most active organ of the OAU. The council's decisions are generally submitted to the assembly, but in more recent years the council has started to take decisions on its own when important issues are at stake. Like the assembly, it lacks the power to execute its decisions. Another function of the council is the coordination of the organisation's specialised commissions.

Secretariat The secretariat consists of an administrative secretary-general with four assistant regional secretaries and some junior personnel. They form a permanent central body executing all administrative affairs as laid down in the charter. The secretary-general's duties are limited to administration, as the name of his post suggests. The main reason for this is to restrict his power and prevent him from making policy. In fact he must remain neutral – strong proof of the absence of real unity within the OAU. This makes the appointment of the secretary-general every four years a very sensitive affair. In practice he is a puppet and his functions are carefully circumscribed. Special care is taken to prevent him from executing commands from individual states or governments and member states may not misuse him. He can react to the OAU's commands only in a strictly neutral capacity.

Commission for Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration The Commission for Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration is perhaps the OAU's most important commission. Consisting of 21 members, and appointed for a period of five years, its aim is to arbitrate between member states and to reconcile them if necessary. The commission has its own management and staff situated in Addis Ababa and, in contrast to the other commissions, falls directly under the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Like the OAU's other organs this commission's decisions cannot be enforced, neither can it suspend a guilty party. Only the assembly can request a state to comply with the commission's suggestions – which makes the council a somewhat ineffective body.

Specialised commissions The OAU also appoints seven specialised commissions for specific purposes. Their aim is to coordinate and harmonise policy with the purpose of promoting close cooperation and mutual understanding. The members of the commissions are the ministers who deal with these affairs in each of the member countries. Among the issues dealt with in the commissions are economic and social affairs, education and cultural affairs, health, sanitation and feeding, defence, science, technical affairs, research, transport and communication and justice. There are a number of additional bodies such as the Commission for Fugitives and the Coordinating Commission for Liberation of Africa which were formed during the foundation of the OAU. Initially this latter commission consisted of eleven members but was later enlarged to seventeen. Its headquarters are in Dar es Salaam. The commission controls an aid fund and is financed by donations amounting to 10 per cent of the government income of member states. Because of mistakes this commission made over the years, it was later augmented by a committee of military experts and a Bureau for Sanctions.

THE OAU AND AFRICAN UNITY

Criticism from Nkrumah

After the formation of the OAU, the Casablanca and Monrovia groupings, Pafmecs and the UAM were disbanded, but the tension between the demands of national sovereignty and the All-African supranationalism which continental unity implied continued to exist. The unity embodied in the OAU charter encountered severe criticism from Nkrumah and his followers. They referred to the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments as a 'trade union of African presidents'²² wishing 'to protect their interests at the expense of the African people'.²³ Until his fall in 1966 Nkrumah continued his efforts to change the OAU into the kind of body he preferred and tried to create an executive with wide powers at every summit meeting. This weakened the OAU, who had to struggle with severe border disputes between Algeria and Morocco as well as those between Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya and a recurrence of the Congo crisis within five months of the organisation being founded. By giving asylum to political fugitives from Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon and Zaïre, Nkrumah caused relations to deteriorate because some African leaders were reminded of the role he had played in the Togo-Ghana feud a few years previously.²⁴ They were also disillusioned by the OAU's inability to prevent Nkrumah's actions, and boycotted the OAU meeting he sponsored in Accra in 1965. The old schism between the Casablanca and Monrovia groupings reappeared and the disbanded UAM revived as Ocam shortly afterwards.

Disillusionment

When Nkrumah fell from power a year later, Nyerere and Touré tried to keep some of his sentiments alive, but the high priority the OAU gave to decolonisation prevented the continuation of a search for closer unity. At the same time, the spirit of Casablanca and Monrovia, the egotism of some of the leaders, national rivalry between member states and political instability filtering through the ranks of the organisation, posed other serious obstacles.²⁵ Nkrumah's dreams of the disappearance of international boundaries and a common African brotherhood, even as long-term processes, became unattainable when the heads of states declared their national boundaries inviolable at the Cairo summit in 1964.²⁶ It was not only the small group of ardent Pan-Africanists

who were disillusioned by the OAU. On its thirteenth anniversary in 1975 the *Daily Nation*, a Kenyan newspaper, lamented that the OAU had 'more to show on the debit than on the credit side'.²⁷ Worse was still to come in 1976 when the Angolan crisis split the OAU into two equal factions, coinciding with ideological pressures between East and West.

Political divisions In 1977 the summit realised that lip service to African unity could not prevent the political fragmentation that was paralysing the OAU. Suggestions to reform the secretariat were made, and these crystallised into a more pragmatic approach in 1978 when a committee to coordinate relations among the OAU's 49 member states was formed. These steps failed; national sovereignty clearly dominated the Pan-African idea while the ideological differences that arose after 1976 pushed the South African issue into the background. Differences about the Cuban presence in the Ogaden, the second invasion of Shaba, and relations between the francophone states and Paris were other bones of contention. In the early eighties the crises in the Western Sahara and Chad demonstrated that the divisions were stronger than ever, and in 1982 it proved impossible to obtain a quorum for that year's summit.

Regional unity From the outset, the creation of regional unity was a possible alternative to the unity that the Addis Ababa conference had failed to achieve. However, attempts to promote regional unity did not originate as OAU projects, but came from individual statesmen – one of these pioneers was even Nkrumah himself. The Ghana–Guinea–Mali union was intended to be a forerunner of a socialist Union of West African states: something which Nkrumah had dreamed about since his days in London. This union also failed. Another abortive West African attempt was made by Senegal and French Sudan – which later became known as Mali. The achievement of Maghribian unity, including Libya, proved to be unrealistic as did the attempt to federate Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda in 1963–1964. Thereupon Nyerere united Tanganyika and the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba in April 1964 and this area became known as the United Republic of Tanzania in April 1965. The mutiny in Tanganyika's army and communist penetration of Zanzibar had much to do with this effort, although it was announced that this move was merely an attempt to bind the historical and cultural links between the two states. The unity that was created in 1965 was very shaky. The Revolutionary Council of Zanzibar retained a substantial amount of sovereignty – thus demanding severe restraint on the part of Nyerere to keep the union together. Despite this, Tanzania far outlived the efforts made in West Africa. After 1972 unity became more binding, and five years later the ruling parties on the island and the mainland merged and a new constitution replaced the temporary one which had been written in 1965. In the new dispensation Zanzibar retained its separate government but started to send representatives to the union parliament for the first time.²⁸

Tanzania

THE WEAKNESS OF AFRICAN UNITY

Other obstacles Other dividing factors gradually emerged from the divergent interests of the OAU's member states. These crystallised into problems in assembling all the heads of state for the annual summit meeting; a preoccupation with domestic affairs including civil

unrest and the high occurrence of coups; a lack of enthusiasm for continental unity; and personal animosities between leaders. As early as 1964 Moïse Tshombe, who was legally entitled to attend the summit, caused trouble; the presence of Idi Amin also kept Nyerere, Kaunda and Seretse Khama away from the 1975 gathering. In 1971 attendance was as low as 10 out of 41 and it dropped to 6 out of 45 five years later. In 1982 the OAU experienced a serious crisis and the summit was postponed twice: as a result of the western Saharan dispute and subsequently, after the crisis in Chad, before it was eventually convened in 1983 in Addis Ababa. This poor attendance eroded the decision-making power of the body. Meetings on ministerial level were more successful in removing misunderstanding and in reducing conflict.²⁹

**The
secretary-
general**

The OAU's inability to act with a modicum of unity is built into its structure, and a powerless secretary-general, with no authority to take decisions, also contributes to this. At best he is a dignified clerk without any political role or relevance³⁰ and all suggestions to improve this position are regularly forestalled. In fact appointments to this sensitive post were another dividing factor, because it was strongly contested. Diallo Telli of Guinea first held the position and he was succeeded by a Cameroonian, Nzo Ekangaki. To appoint his successor, W. E. M'Boumoue, also from Cameroon, twenty ballots had to be held, and the position became even worse in 1983 when three candidates contested the position before an acting secretary-general, Peter Onu of Nigeria, previously the assistant-secretary for West Africa, was appointed.³¹ He held the post until 1985 when Ide Oumarou of Niger succeeded him. Since 1989 Salim Ahmed Salim of Tanzania held the post.

**Mem-
bership
ques-
tion**

The principle that every independent African state except South Africa could join the OAU was another factor that harmed the body's efficiency. Mauritania was admitted from the outset, despite Morocco's complaints, while Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana were allowed to join despite Sudan's objection and their economic dependence on South Africa. Deeper divisions surrounded the admittance of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic despite strong Moroccan opposition. The Polisario Front, who preferred independence instead of the division of the Spanish Sahara between Morocco and Mauritania, enjoyed recognition from 22 members of the OAU.

ATTEMPTS AT ECONOMIC COOPERATION

**African
Devel-
opment
Bank**

Economic cooperation was a distinct aim of the OAU, and some African statesmen saw economic cooperation as the most practical way towards the desired continental unity. Julius Nyerere regarded regional economic groupings as 'stepping stones towards African unity'.³² Organisations for economic cooperation were founded even before the formation of the OAU, and these were more successful than attempts at political cooperation. Some, such as the Equatorial Customs Union (UDE) and the Conseil de l'Entente, both established in 1959, had limited aims, but the African Development Bank (ADB), whose origin dates back to the All African Peoples' Conference in Tunis in 1960, is among the more successful efforts to create continental cooperation. Twenty states were members of the bank when it started its operations in 1966 and ten years later membership had grown to 39. The bank aims at social and economic development

on an individual and collective scale with preference for regional cooperation. It has the power to initiate projects, and by 1974 it had invested R500 million in development projects, while an African Development Fund was established in the same year.

- Cus-
toms
and
econ-
omic
unions** The formation of interstate facilities for the economic development of North, East and Central Africa enjoyed the support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and, in the early sixties, a Customs and Economic Union for Central Africa (UDEAC) started to work towards complete freedom of movement of people, goods, commodities, services and capital in order to coordinate industrial development, transport and tax systems. By late 1967 the UDEAC was far advanced in realising a general monetary system, one transport system and free movement of capital and people; at this stage two member states, Chad and the Central African Republic, became dissatisfied and, joined by Zaïre, they formed the Economic Union of Central Africa (UEAC) in April 1968. The Central African Republic soon became disillusioned and reverted to the UDEAC. Since then both bodies have existed alongside each other; all efforts to reconcile them had failed up until 1980.
- Ocam** The Union of African and Malagassian Economic Cooperation, another organisation of this kind, was formed in 1964 and was a reconstruction of the disbanded Union of Africa and Madagascar (UAM). It was a definite economic bloc, but its 14 members soon felt that a more politically oriented body would serve their purposes better. The Africa and Madagascar Community Organisation (Ocam) developed from this, and although it lost Mauritania in 1965, Zaïre and Rwanda later joined the organisation. It aimed at political, economic, social, educational and cultural ties between francophone Africa and Madagascar within the wider framework of the OAU. Ocam had its own summit of state and governmental heads, a council of ministers, a general secretary and a charter which all pointed to its political orientation. This drew criticism from the OAU which accused Ocam members of greater loyalty towards Ocam than to the OAU and claimed that its existence could stimulate regional economic bloc formation, a step which the UN encouraged. However, by 1967 the OAU's attitude had softened, and its summit began to support regional economic cooperation as a forerunner to a future African Economic Community similar to the European Economic Community (EEC).
- OERS** This revised view stimulated existing bodies such as UDEAC and led to the formation of the Organisation of Senegal River States (OERS) in 1968. Guinea, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal joined the OERS and wanted to develop the Senegal River basin for the benefit of all. The agreement also included stipulations on cooperation in commerce and health. Mutual differences, military coups and strong personal differences between Touré and Senghor brought the OERS to the brink of collapse while the OAU failed to sort out their differences; in 1971 a new organisation, the Organisation for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS), was established without Guinea, but it too, failed to create the necessary cooperation. Meanwhile Ocam realised that it was trespassing on the area of the OAU and depoliticised itself in 1974 by limiting its activities to economic, social and cultural cooperation. Hereafter decline set in and, although it still functioned in the 1980s, its members consisted of the small and poorer francophone states who were primarily concerned with linguistic and cultural links.³³

EAEC Two other groupings developed under the umbrella of the OAU. One was the East Africa Economic Community (EAEC), which grew from its colonial predecessors, the East African High Commission (1948) and the East African Common Services Organisation (1961). The latter played a significant role in maintaining East Africa's common services and survived the abortive negotiations to form an East African federation in 1963. Fears of unequal advantages spelt its doom – Tanganyika and Uganda claimed that Kenya would derive greater benefit than was just. A compromise resulting in the EAEC and an East African Common Market, controlled by an East African Authority, was reached with the signing of a Treaty for East African Cooperation on 6 June 1967. This consisted of ministers, five councils and an East African legislative assembly of nine members; offices were to be decentralised. An East African Development Bank was called into existence in order to promote industrial development and all trade restrictions were removed. Kenya continued to dominate, however, and by the mid-1970s the organisation was dwindling. The political will to make it succeed was absent, because Nyerere, who chaired the Authority, did not call meetings since he refused to sit at the same table with Amin of Uganda while his socialist economic policies based on Communist Chinese and North Vietnamese models ruled out any cooperation with Kenya.³⁴ In 1977 the EAEC crumbled completely. In 1983 Nyerere closed his borders with Kenya until the assets and liabilities of the EAEC were sorted out. This was achieved in November, whereupon Nyerere opened the border once again.

CEAO In West Africa moves towards economic regionalism became stronger after Nkrumah disappeared from the scene in 1966, and as a result of the criticism the ECA directed at the discussions held to form a body based on the EEC a year later. Francophone West Africa was suspicious and interpreted the tentative moves as another ploy to create Anglo-Saxon economic domination. In 1970 they established a West African economic community known as the CEAO which tied up with France and the EEC rather than their English-speaking neighbours. In this region Nigeria, prospering as a result of the oil boom, recovered quickly after the civil war and became the economic giant of the area. With a favourable balance of payments, and from a position of strength compared with its non-oil-producing neighbours, Nigeria began to steer towards a West African economic community.

Ecowas To placate francophone fears, Nigeria used Togo as a screen while the Lomé Convention of 1974, regulating relations between 46 African, Caribbean and Pacific states and the EEC, served as a guideline. In May 1975, 15 countries signed the Lagos treaty which created the Economic Organisation of West African States (Ecowas) after Senegal's suggestion that Zaïre and the francophone states of Equatorial Africa be included to counter the English bias had been refused. Ecowas followed the EEC model and aimed at the removal of all customs duties, trade restrictions and barriers to mutual export goods within fifteen years. Other aims included a shared commercial policy towards countries outside the economic community, and common citizenship ensuring freedom of movement, work and residence to all people living within the community. It also provided for a cooperation fund to compensate and develop member states who suffered a loss of revenue as a result of reduced tariff rates. Lomé became its headquar-

ters, and an annual meeting of heads of member states and a subordinate council of ministers were introduced.

Problems facing Ecowas

Among its successes, Ecowas can point to the creation of an energy programme and fund as well as a \$25-million communication project. A programme to attain agricultural self-sufficiency was also initiated, but progress towards harmony on the issue of customs and the free movement of goods and people was less successful. The free movement of migrant labourers across West African borders is a specific feature of the region's economy,³⁵ but in 1970 Ghana suddenly expelled about 170 000 foreign Africans, notably traders; the Côte d'Ivoire followed suit. In this way Ecowas failed as an intermediate step towards true Pan-Africanism, but there were other factors that contributed towards Ecowas's problems, proving that the development towards a West African economic community will take much longer than was initially envisaged. Money made through Nigerian oil failed to finance the development of the entire West African economy and Nigeria ran into serious financial troubles itself – which led to the expulsion of some 2 million foreigners in January 1983. Other major obstacles were linguistic barriers and poor communication links, and there also were serious differences in the level and structure of the members' customs duties. Ten of Ecowas's 16 members were involved in other regional groupings such as the Conseil de l'Entente and the CEAO and in the latter case trade was promoted by means of a 65 per cent tariff reduction. The proliferation of currencies, foreign exchange difficulties and controls made the attainment of monetary unity a long-term objective. Economic nationalism played a role too, and the many coups disrupted regional cooperation. In 1982 Ecowas was still hopeful of creating a free trade zone by 1989.³⁶

SADCC Between 1977 and 1978 the idea of setting up a regional organisation in southern Africa gained momentum. Although economic factors played a role in this movement, the South African idea of drawing its neighbouring states – including even the former Portuguese colonies and Zimbabwe – into a constellation of southern African states, points to a clear political motive. In November 1979 the four so-called frontline states – Tanzania, Zambia, Angola and Mozambique – attempted to widen their struggle against South Africa by pulling Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi into the battle against South Africa, hoping to wean them from their pro-South African economic preferences.³⁷ The prospect of Zimbabwean independence encouraged the formation of a regional organisation which could work towards loosening economic ties with South Africa: Zimbabwe's strong transport system could serve as the nucleus of a southern African transport system north of the Limpopo River. This was one of the prerequisites for the realisation of the dream of peaceful development without South Africa. On 1 April 1980 nine states including Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi formed the South African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in Lusaka. South West Africa–Namibia adopted observer status in expectation of its independence.

Aims The SADCC's aims included four specific aspects. Dependence on South Africa specifically, but also on all other foreign powers, had to be reduced as soon as possible; ties creating true and equal regional integration had to be forged; the region's sources had

to be mobilised to promote national, interstate and regional policy; and coordinated action was to be established to obtain international cooperation within a framework of economic liberation. At its foundation, the SADCC claimed that a new era in regional integration and the liberation struggle in southern Africa had arrived and the SADCC was portrayed as the pioneer of a regional organisation totally different from any comparable African body, especially the ineffective East African Economic Community – it claimed that its controlling structure and premises were entirely innovative. Because respect for the national sovereignty of member states was of extreme importance, and it was taken that the SADCC could not dictate economic policy to its members, the creation of a supra-bureaucracy was avoided. Supreme power was vested in the annual meeting of government heads, while a council of ministers and coordinating and specialised committees assisted them. The SADCC's headquarters was in Gaborone, Botswana, and from there a centralised secretariat served the organisation. Individual governments were given help in embarking on various projects and although individuality was encouraged, six areas were identified where cooperation would take place. These were trade and communication, agriculture, energy, manpower, industrial development and finance.

Priorities and undertakings Because six of the SADCC's members were landlocked states, transport and communication was given high priority in an effort to lessen dependence on South Africa as soon as possible. A South African Trade and Communication Commission was formed in Maputo as early as July 1980. Every member state could choose a sector in which it wished to take the lead. Agriculture was another sector which assumed particular urgency in order to reduce dependence on South Africa for food: this became Zimbabwe's responsibility. Tanzania became responsible for industrial cooperation, Swaziland for manpower, Zambia for mining, Lesotho for soil preservation, Botswana for health and Malawi for wildlife and forestry. There were no SADCC projects, only undertakings which the organisation monitored and coordinated. The SADCC did not envisage a common market of any kind, but tariff walls and the decrease of tariffs and inter-African trade featured among the aspects it intended to consider.

Sources of income The SADCC was dependent on continued foreign sources for its funding. The Soviet Union and the Arab oil-producing countries remained aloof. The ADB made a contribution and the SADCC began its own development fund, while EEC countries and Western aid agencies reacted favourably to the overtures of the SADCC's London liaison office. During 1980, \$870 million was pledged for the transport and communication project – this money was made available specifically to the countries in which this project was launched. Malawi received money for railway development while Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique were given funds for road building. Three years later the donors were less generous, but pledges relating to agricultural development and industrial cooperation were made by the ADB and the EEC.

Inhibiting factors There were various factors which inhibited the SADCC's projects in the early years, however. Between 1980 and 1985, droughts and locusts hampered attempts to increase food production. At the same time war in Angola and Mozambique, where Unita and Renamo resisted one-party regimes, prevented efforts to link the landlocked member

states to the sea.³⁸ The drop in oil prices also had serious implications for Angola. One of the SADCC's priorities was 'disengagement' from South Africa, because, according to the four original 'frontline' states (Angola, Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania), which form the core of the SADCC, this could accelerate the capitulation of the South African government. 'Disengagement' was thus an instrument towards a specific goal – the liberation of Africa south of the Limpopo River.

**De-
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The opposite occurred: between 1980 and 1986 the dependence of members of the SADCC on South Africa increased,³⁹ and it became questionable whether member states were willing to make the sacrifices 'disengagement' demanded – despite their acceptance of sanctions against South Africa. SADCC members depended on South Africa in a variety of ways. Tanzania and Angola were in the best position but, in contrast, 40 per cent of Lesotho's exports went through South Africa. Swaziland followed closely with 37 per cent, while Zimbabwe sent 10 per cent of its exports through South African harbours. In 1988 Zambia's exports through southern ports amounted to 1 per cent. Imports show a completely different picture and, with the exception of Angola and Tanzania, all seven SADCC member states were threatened by economic dislocation if the proposed international blockade South Africa was instituted. Thirty per cent of the SADCC states' total imports went through South African ports in 1984, and these included essential commodities such as machinery and parts for production processes. Four of these countries had trade agreements with South Africa, while Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland belonged to the South African Customs Union. Zimbabwe, who produced 50 per cent of the SADCC countries' exports to South Africa, broke off diplomatic relations with South Africa but maintained trade and commercial bonds. Other aspects of dependence by some of the SADCC countries on South Africa concerned the use of its rail networks, petroleum and electricity supplies, as well as the foreign valuta which labourers from Malawi, Mozambique, Lesotho and Botswana earned for their home countries.⁴⁰

**Re-
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Economic realities imparted a large degree of uncertainty to 'disengagement', consequently more attention was paid to transport and communication projects and the SADCC 'kept [on] plugging the 1980 line';⁴¹ this tempered the ideals of regional integration and economic liberation of South Africa. The implications of regional development, the essential justification for regional cooperation, were significant, however. For example, Zimbabwe's intention of developing its Wankie Power Project meant that Zambia had to sacrifice some of its main export, electricity, while Mozambique also had plans to upgrade the Cahora Bassa hydroelectric scheme and export the power to members of the SADCC. Members were equal in status, and regional integration had to be applied with caution because of unfavourable experience in the days of the federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the Portuguese colonial union and the South African Customs Union. Regional integration and development were attractive only when specific benefits were apparent. As Botswana's former president, Seretse Khama, once stated, '[the] SADCC's program of action must offer and be seen to offer real benefits to each state. There must be a perception of common interests but must [sic] provide for the real and immediate needs of each cooperating state'.⁴² Botswana was obviously not

willing to extricate itself from South Africa merely to fall under the domination of another state.

The SADCC's continued concentration on transport and communication eventually yielded positive results in Mozambique in 1987. Renamo's attacks decreased, and Mozambique received greater sympathy from Western money-lenders, probably because of adroit diplomacy in its requests for aid, the West's aversion to Renamo, Mozambique's preference not to use foreign troops against Renamo, and Unicef's influence in promoting Mozambique's affairs. There was a change in Angola, too, where the South Africans suffered serious military setbacks at Cuito Canavale and its economy began to crumble: the South African government turned towards the negotiating table to discuss the independence of South West Africa/Namibia.⁴³

THE OAU AND THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

Cooperation essential

Even before the establishment of the OAU, the ECA warned the new African states that economic cooperation – at least between close neighbours – was essential for the economic development of the continent.⁴⁴ When the OAU came into existence a few months after this warning was uttered, cooperation towards improvement of life was among the aims it set for itself. While some of the founding fathers saw economic cooperation as an essential stepping stone towards the desired continental unity, others felt that economic unity was possible only after the broadening of political cooperation.⁴⁵ In both cases the OAU failed to achieve any substantial results.

ECA

In 1963, the ECA was already busy with plans for African economic development which included the forming of an African Development Bank as was suggested at the second All-African Peoples' Conference at Tunis. The ECA preferred an integrated approach to African social and economic problems, and welcomed the OAU as an ally in the battle against economic and social problems and development. Despite its aim and charter, the OAU was disinclined to involve itself in economic development and concerned itself mainly with decolonisation and anti-apartheid measures, leaving the continent's economic problems to the ECA until such time as the radical and socialist secretary-general, Diallo Telli of Guinea, took over. In 1967 he started attempts to get the ECA under the OAU's control. This was largely because of Africa's economic decline and the civil unrest that arose in Nigeria.

Intervention in the ECA

Intervention in the affairs of the ECA increased and at the Kinshasa summit of 1967, economic issues featured prominently and a resolution on inter-African cooperation was taken which clearly underlined the link between politics and economic issues. The OAU wanted to end Africa's dependence on the developed countries by creating regional groupings and an African common market. Telli continued to encourage interest in economic affairs by submitting reports on economic and social development to the Council of Ministers.

Declaration

In the same year, an important step was taken when 31 African states met in Algiers and adopted the African Declaration of Algiers. All of the non-aligned countries accepted

this too, prior to its submission to the Second United Nations Trade and Development Conference in 1968. The OAU's role in the continent's economic development was also strengthened when the 1968 summit recognised that the economic integration of Africa was a prerequisite for the realisation of the organisation's other aspirations.

African voice at UN The OAU went one step further in 1969 when the African group at the UN became strong enough to make its voice heard in the world body. This was also significant for the UN's economic policy: the Africans demanded a more decisive say in economic policy. The ECA was forced to make the OAU a partner in all its plans and projects and this gave the OAU a stronger political voice. The ECA accepted this and saw the new arrangement as one that could benefit Africa. Some of the economic projects came under joint control although the ECA did most of the work. Considerable cooperation existed despite the continued existence of competition, but this alone was not enough to make projects viable. Shortage of manpower, money, and the lack of the political will to succeed also played a role.

Economic Charter of 1973; Lomé Convention During the seventies the OAU became increasingly concerned with the continent's economic state and issued an Economic Charter emphasising the need for economic independence in 1973. This document augmented the Charter of 1963 which set down the political base upon which the organisation intended to function, accepting the desire for economic independence and emphasising the need for economic cooperation as the base for stronger unity. To develop this further, Zaïre proposed the creation of an Economic Coordinating Committee for the entire continent and the formation of an African Common Market. Cooperating with the ECA and ADB, the OAU demanded a new Interim Economic Order, and this was put before the UN at a special session in May 1974. The OAU's role in efforts to change the world economy was, however, minimal; Algeria played a more prominent role in this respect. Paradoxically, in 1975 the OAU accepted that the responsibility for Africa's economic growth lay with the African states themselves, but continued to shift responsibility to the shoulders of the UN and the other non-aligned countries. Africa's greatest achievement in her efforts to establish a more just economic relationship with the industrial countries was the Lomé Convention signed with the Caribbean, Pacific and the nine EEC countries in 1975. In this the EEC made major concessions to Africa,⁴⁶ but lack of unity in its ranks prevented the effectiveness of the measures.

Cairo summit of 1977 In the 1970s black Africa's economic position deteriorated when oil prices rose sharply. The OAU tried to enlist Arab support for the continent's ailing economy and an attempt was made to hold an Afro-Arab summit in 1974, but this only came to fruition three years later when the Arab League and the OAU met in Cairo. Sixty countries and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation signed a declaration to cooperate politically and economically, especially in finance, mining, communication and preferential tariffs. More money was made available with the creation of an Arab Bank for the Development of Africa – a move that drew sharp criticism from the OAU's secretary-general who saw no need for another institution similar to the ADB.

Lagos summit of 1980

Many of the Arab undertakings at Cairo came to nothing, and a drop in oil prices in the early eighties indicated that Africa could not rely on the Arab countries for economic aid. At an economic summit in Lagos in 1980, another plan of action was devised, which aimed yet again at the attainment of a common market, this time at the end of the twentieth century. This was to be based on Ecowas and the SADCC which were formed at the same time under the OAU umbrella. Emphasis was placed on food production with an eye to self-sufficiency within a decade.⁴⁷ Other goals included self-sufficiency in building materials, clothing and energy. Transport and communication were also earmarked for attention. The chances of success here were poor. The OAU was experiencing financial problems and many individual states were importing grain. This in turn had a negative influence on the balance of payments which went into decline during the oil crisis of 1973–1974 and the drop in African export commodity prices from 1977.

Summit of 1985

Economic problems increasingly occupied the OAU's attention from the mid-eighties. They even pushed the troubles in Chad into the background and after Morocco's withdrawal from the OAU in 1984, the same happened to the Western Sahara. New attempts were made to obtain the ECA's support at the 1985 summit at Addis Ababa but, at a special meeting, the General Assembly failed to obtain special commitments from the international community. The world body emphasised the necessity of self-help and acknowledgement of previous mistakes. There was a general vagueness about Africa's debts, but the continent's need for money was estimated at \$130 000 million by 1990. Of this, Africa was expected to find \$80 000 million from its own sources. At that point the 1986 summit of the OAU accepted economic restoration programmes inspired by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which had differing effects on various countries.⁴⁸

Economic crisis

Conditions deteriorated as the nett outflow of capital from Africa continued; commodity prices declined further and disappointing contributions from Western powers threw all calculations into disorder. There was increased pressure for a new summit to deal with these debts, and in Africa a difference of opinion developed between the more radical point of view, which favoured a unilateral and collective repudiation of all debts, and a more moderate view, which felt that the debt crisis had not yet reached the point which justified such action.⁴⁹ It was decided to hold an international conference to find a solution for the crisis. This was confirmed in November 1987, and the ECA and the ADB were saddled with the arrangement of the conference. Only if this did not yield the desired result were more drastic steps envisaged.⁵⁰

Seven-point declaration

The Western creditor nations did not favour the conference despite their growing concern for black Africa's debts; but renewed pressure followed for this conference. In 1988 African debts reached about \$200 000 million before an extraordinary OAU summit accepted a seven-point declaration aimed at the Western creditor nations. It asked for a ten-year suspension of debt service payments; an interest-free rescheduling of debts over a period of fifty years; a transfer of existing bilateral debts into grants; a reduction of real interest rates on new loans, facilitating at least part of the repayments into debtor currency; the lessening of maturity and grace periods on private loans; and

- an international conference between the OAU and the Western creditor nations to discuss the debt problem.⁵¹
- Con-
ces-
sions** It was obvious that Africa stood at the crossroads and needed a lasting solution to its debt crisis. Serious stumbling blocks remained, and donor countries such as the United States, France and Canada remained unwilling to hold the suggested summit. They were willing to accept a partial repayment of debts in African currency and a rescheduling of debts if the African countries accepted an IMF stabilisation programme. During 1987 the United Kingdom and some of the Nordic countries cancelled \$1 000 million of Africa's debts, while new funds were made available to some of Africa's low-income countries.
- Unre-
solved
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lems** This did not do much to lighten the burden, and more calls for an international summit continued as Africa's debts escalated to \$230 000 million. In 1989 the OAU summit repeated its request for a relaxation of debts, the cancellation of the poorest countries' debts, and easier repayment terms. The ten-year suspension on service payments was repeated, and it was suggested that the 'total maximum level of debt service' be paid as a percentage of exports. Although the request for an international conference received some sympathy from France and the EEC countries, most creditor nations remained unwilling to yield, because they feared the effect this would have on Latin America – a continent which had even greater debts than Africa. The debt problem therefore remained unsolved when Africa entered the last decade of the twentieth century.⁵²
- Effec-
tive-
ness of
OAU** The effectiveness of the OAU in promoting Africa's interests politically, economically and socially can thus be questioned and criticised. As Prof Harry Gailey wrote in 1983: '... the OAU is to Pan-Africanism as the United Nations is to world government. While one can applaud the achievements of both, it would be foolish to assume that they play anything but a secondary role in political decision making.'⁵³ African unity, however, has nothing to do with sterile uniformity or unanimity or successes in international or even African politics and economics. The decisive connection is far more likely that 'profound sense of being African'⁵⁴ – perhaps this can be offered as an explanation for the survival of the OAU in the turmoil of Africa's independent existence.

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Africa and world politics

Super-power rivalry

During the decolonisation period, there was an expectancy that Africa would refrain from involvement in world politics since neither the United States nor the Soviet Union, despite strong anti-colonial views, was directly involved in Africa. Independent Africa had also opted for non-alignment – a policy of neutrality in the Cold War which set in between the two superpowers after the Second World War. This stance was unrealistic, however, because Africa's geopolitical or strategic position and its mineral wealth soon involved it in superpower rivalry.

AFRICA AND NON-ALIGNMENT

Nehru's policy of non-alignment

Non-alignment was a policy formulated by Pandit Nehru, the prime minister of India, which had become independent in 1947. Nehru reasoned that India had nothing to do with the ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, or the Cold War which had evolved from this conflict at about the time India became independent. He refused to associate his country with either of the two superpowers. This did not imply an unwillingness to benefit from the Cold War: as long as India could obtain the much-needed economic aid it desired from the superpowers without becoming involved in any political ties with either country. To promote this view, India associated itself with the Soviet-American anti-colonial campaign at the UN in an

obvious bid to win the support of aspiring black nationalists for the policy of non-commitment.

Bandung Conference 1955

Nehru was soon rewarded from unexpected quarters. In 1948 the Yugoslavian leader, Josip Tito, who differed from the Soviets on the interpretation of Marxism and socialism, changed from international communism to nationalism and non-alignment.¹ Nehru's second prominent convert was the Egyptian ruler, Gamal Nasser, who fell strongly under his influence in 1953 when he realised that he could play off the East against the West for his own personal benefit and Egypt's. Egypt was one of the six African countries present at the Bandung Conference held in the Indonesian capital in April 1955. The others were independent Ethiopia, Liberia and Libya while the Sudan and the Gold Coast, soon to become independent, also sent delegates. Although this conference dealt primarily with Asiatic affairs, it took a strong stand against colonialism in order to win the hearts of Africa's leaders for the policy of non-alignment and it became the forerunner of future Afro-Asiatic solidarity.

Bloc of non-aligned states

Although the delegates were divided on the issue of non-alignment, they managed to cast this aside in what became known as the 'spirit of Bandung'; they all accepted non-alignment, which implied a cohesive bloc of Third World nations bent on the promotion of peace, directed against any involvement with either of the two superpowers. As Nasser put it: 'We oppose those who oppose us, and are at peace with those who make peace with us.'² Africa, which attained independence while the Cold War dominated global politics, produced more non-aligned states than any other continent. With the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia, who both preferred a pro-Western stance, the other African states saw greater security outside the two ideological camps. This attitude did not exclude mutual differences and the more radically inclined states leaned strongly towards the Soviet Union because not only was this superpower openly anti-colonial, but it was also anti-European and anti-Western and therefore anti-American. Moreover many African leaders adhered to the socialist ideology, although there were also those like Gabon who wanted cooperation and aid from Europe and the United States: a view that tied in with the French preference that the new African states should link up closely with the European Common Market (ECM).³ This also had some common ground with the policy of the United States, especially during the Eisenhower presidency, for continued cooperation between the former African colonies and their former mother countries.⁴

THE SOVIET UNION AND AFRICA

Soviet interest

The Bandung Conference opened new possibilities for the Soviet Union, despite their not being invited to attend the conference. The presence of the six African delegates at Bandung convinced the Soviet leader, Nikita Krushchev, that Africa was a new area of political influence which the Soviet Union could utilise in the struggle against the West. In 1956 he told the Twentieth Party Congress (somewhat belatedly) that the national awakening of the African people had begun and that it was necessary to reconsider the existing Stalinist policy which regarded the nationalist leaders of Africa as bourgeois lackeys of Western capitalism and therefore unworthy of support.

Lack of knowledge of Africa The lack of historical ties and scanty knowledge of Africa handicapped this intention. During the partition of Africa Tsarist Russia had shown only limited concern, and after the revolution of 1917 Soviet attention was absorbed in domestic problems. When the Second World War came to an end, the Russians showed some interest in the politics of the Mediterranean and the Horn of Africa. They attended the Afro-Asiatic Peoples' Conference in Cairo in 1955 and Nkrumah's All African Peoples' Conference in 1958, despite the fact that diplomatic relations were only established in the following year.

Obstacles to Russian influence The Kremlin was aware of its lack of knowledge about Africa and took steps to change this. A separate African division was formed at the Institute of Oriental Studies in 1956 and three years later it developed into an African Institute where young Russians studied African languages and history in order to equip themselves with the necessary background to take decisions on Africa. The newly acquired knowledge brought some improvement but did not remove other stumbling blocks such as the classlessness of Africa's traditional society, the influence of the continent's traditional religions, the influence of Christianity and Islam, and the existence of ethnic nationalism. In accordance with the philosophy of non-alignment, Africa's leaders, civilian and military, did not move so close to the Soviets as they would have liked, and the existence of African socialism proved to be yet another stumbling block.

Soviet support for national democracies The Soviets found African socialism unacceptable and believed that only one form of socialism existed: their scientific and Marxist socialism. After Stalin's death in 1953, this view changed to some extent and made way for the idea that there may be several different paths towards socialism. While Africa's new leaders were not communists in the orthodox sense of the word, and a politically effective African proletariat and communist parties did not exist, the Soviets concentrated on nationalists who had socialist inclinations. Leaders who introduced state control over industry, banking and foreign trade, and the communal ownership of land were regarded as revolutionary 'non-capitalists' on their way to true socialism; they were merely omitting the capitalist phase of the process. These states were the only ones worthy of Soviet support, and in 1960 a conference of Communist and Workers' Parties endorsed Soviet friendship for what were called 'national democracies'.⁵ Two North African leaders, Gamal Nasser and Ahmed Ben Bella, and three black leaders from West Africa, Sekou Touré, Kwame Nkrumah and Modiba Keita, were considered fit to serve Soviet interests on the continent. The West Africans were invited to attend the Twenty-second Congress of the Soviet Union's Communist Party and received Lenin Prizes while Nasser and Ben Bella were honoured by being named Heroes of the Soviet Union.

Guinea, Mali and Ghana Sekou Touré's Guinea was the first of the West African states to attract Soviet attention. After his break with France in 1958 his survival hung in the balance, but his communist and trade union background made him a communist hero whom the Soviets believed was totally committed to the communist cause.⁶ Moscow did not hesitate to recognise his government and soon offered him credits, trade, aid in creating a new currency to free him from the franc zone, and Czech arms. Personal contact followed and the Soviets, aware of Guinea's strategic importance with regard to the Atlantic Ocean, sent an experienced ambassador, Daniel Solod, to make Conakry the centre of Soviet in-

fluence and activities in West Africa. After Modiba Keita's French Sudan (Mali) broke away from its shortlived union with Senegal, it turned to Guinea and entered the Soviet fold because it had no other friends. Like Touré, Mali wanted to skip the capitalist phase on the road to socialism. Initially Ghana, like Mali, had little attraction for the Soviet Union. Immediately after independence Nkrumah failed the Kremlin's test for a pure socialist. His preferences for Commonwealth and British and American capital were responsible for this. But in 1958 this changed. His immediate financial aid for the struggling Touré and the fact that he housed the revolutionary Union Populaire du Cameroun in his country played a role here. The death of his friend Lumumba in 1960 at the hands of CIA agents⁷ changed his pro-American attitude. It also soured his relations with Western countries such as Britain, France, West Germany, Israel, Belgium and the Netherlands, whom he increasingly accused of neo-colonialism.⁸ To demonstrate his non-alignment more strongly Nkrumah turned to the communists, and according to one writer he and Algeria's Ben Bella became Moscow's closest friends in Africa.⁹ In 1960 Nkrumah received his first credits from Moscow.

**Growing
re-
sent-
ment of
Moscow**

Moscow's attitude was friendly, but its interests in Africa differed from those of the African states. The Soviets tried to break existing ties between these new states and the West; in fact they tried to make things difficult for the capitalist world in general. This was not necessarily in the interest of the African states, whose preference for non-alignment had coloured their decision not to take sides in the Cold War. The money the Soviets made available was used to loosen the ties between the new states and the West and also to gain control of their exports. It included the financing of mutually agreed capital projects, meeting the balance on the trading account, and training blacks in the Soviet Union. Soviet experts went to Ghana and Guinea to get a hold on their economies and to win their favour with spectacular projects. But recommended projects such as the collectivisation of communal land in Guinea ran into disfavour, and this caused unrest. Many of the Russian experts were unfamiliar with local conditions and their feasibility studies were ineffective; then too goods, often of poor quality, either arrived late or exceeded what was required. All of this added to a growing feeling of resentment.

**Deterio-
rating re-
lations
with
Ghana**

But the Soviets themselves had reason for dissatisfaction. Ghana overloaded them with suggested projects and left it to the Russians to sort out the particulars. The ideological benefits that the Soviets expected in return for the money they made available were not fully forthcoming; indeed, the results benefited Ghana more than the Kremlin. Moscow was an assured purchaser of Ghanaian cocoa and Russian purchases sustained the price of the product when world prices fell. The prominence of Russian advisors soon proved to be unacceptable to many Ghanaians.¹⁰ Another bone of contention was that Nkrumah's personal Guard Regiment, which was organised on a healthy budget by the Russians, operated under a separate command after 1962. This caused dissatisfaction in the regular army when lack of funds meant a shortage of material – and subsequently became one of the significant reasons for the coup which pushed Nkrumah from power in 1966. Relations between the two countries rapidly deteriorated. General Joseph Ankrah's new regime was vehemently anti-Soviet. He expelled all but a thousand

experts and closed the Cuban, Chinese and Russian embassies as well as the entire East German trade mission.

Worsening relations with Guinea

Relations with Guinea had gradually deteriorated since the days when a lonely Touré, afraid of foreign invasion and desperately short of arms, welcomed the Soviet's overtures. Guinea, who was unable to feed its population, needed food and not arms – a situation the Russians seemed unable to comprehend. Self-interest prevailed and besides the one-sided bauxite venture, the Soviets refused to assist Guinea by building a fishing fleet or making any of the catches taken in Guinean waters available to the local population. Although Guinea's overtures towards the Eastern Bloc countries advanced quickly,¹¹ ideological affinity had its limits, and in December 1961 Touré sent the Soviet ambassador home, accusing him of the so-called 'teachers' plot' against his government. This was not the first 'plot' Touré had exposed against his own increasingly autocratic rule: previously the French and not the Russians had been accused. In all probability the Soviets were involved in unnecessary interference in Guinea's own affairs, and when five members of the teachers' trade union criticised his government, Touré was quick to accuse them of endangering the Marxist revolution in his country and had them sentenced to penal servitude for periods of five to ten years. Touré's position deteriorated as pupils and training college students took to the streets and demanded the death of the president. Although the Soviets sent a deputy prime minister to Conakry to conciliate,¹² this did not prevent Touré from turning to a more neutral foreign policy. At a World Peace Conference in Stockholm in 1961, he supported the Chinese against the Russians and he first accepted aid from the United States in 1962. His turnabout took on further proportions when he refused to allow the Soviets to use Conakry's airport, which, ironically enough, had been built by the Russians during the Cuban missile crisis.

Congo crisis

The ideological motive also failed to yield results in the Congo crisis of the early sixties. Lumumba conformed admirably with the Soviet requirement for an African socialist, but after he had been removed from power in September 1960, he was killed early in 1961. The Soviets immediately withdrew support for UN measures and threatened to intervene in favour of Lumumba's heir, Antoine Gizenga, who was in revolt against Lumumba's successors in the capital. Only Moscow's West African clients and Nasser gave support; the rest of Africa rallied behind the UN. When Sudan refused the Soviet Union permission to cross its territory to come to the aid of Gizenga's wilting revolt, Gizenga lost his value for the Soviets. In 1965, when the pro-American Mobutu seized power, he closed the Soviet embassy.

Nigeria

Moscow met with greater success in Africa's largest but most anti-leftwing state, Nigeria. The Soviets distrusted the feudal pro-British rulers from the north and sympathised with the Ibos in the east. They were also against military rule, but soon changed their ideas after their civilian friends in Guinea and Ghana let them down. At least the military seemed to ensure more stability and provided the opportunity of doing business with people who managed to remain in power; this also meant that the Soviets could act against what remained of capitalism. The Muslim north had other virtues. The Kremlin had good reason to be on friendly terms with this region since the

Soviet Union had a large Muslim population. Good relations with these people could benefit the Soviets in the Middle East. When it became clear that the Ibos in the east contemplated secession, Moscow ran into difficulties as most members of the OAU opposed this move and the Soviets were not inclined to lose popularity with them. Conveniently, the Kremlin detected a capitalist plot in the secession move and gave full support to the northerner, General Yakubu Gowon.

**Civil
war**

Initial aid was in a non-military economic form, and Lagos accepted loans from the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites. The establishment of a steel industry was the main focus of these professionally conducted negotiations. What made the whole issue remarkable was that this African state was known for its distinct antagonism towards communism and the supporters of this ideology. In 1968 the Soviets promised a vast credit for the steel project, but when the civil war broke out things changed. Gowon was in dire need of arms which the British and Americans refused to supply. The Soviets grabbed the opportunity and supplied aircraft, piloted by Egyptians, and heavy artillery which Gowon could not obtain from Britain. In contrast to its previous approach to the African states, the Kremlin did not attempt to exploit Nigeria's difficulties for its own ends. Alexander Romanov, the ambassador who conducted these negotiations, knew that he could not turn Nigeria into a communist or satellite state. Instead the Soviets aimed to befriend this African giant, and within weeks of the outbreak of hostilities Soviet aircraft and Czech arms arrived in Nigeria. The Soviets aimed at, and achieved, limited returns as a more tempered association between the two states emerged. The significance of Moscow's relations with Nigeria lies in the fact that it loosened ideological restraints on the Kremlin's approach to Africa despite the fact that much of the ideological rhetoric remained. The Soviets simply reacted to Nigeria's practical demands.

COMMUNIST CHINA'S IDEOLOGICAL STAKE IN AFRICA

**Bandung
Conference**

When the Communist Chinese foreign minister, Zhou Enlai, attended the Conference of Bandung in 1955, his country had no formal relations with Africa. Before this new communist power attended the Geneva Peace Conference on the French withdrawal from Indochina in the previous year, Communist China's foreign policy was closely linked to that of the Soviet Union. At Bandung the Chinese communists went out of their way to prove to the other delegates that they were more sensible and amenable than popular opinion would have others believe. They were also anxious to demonstrate that their form of communism was reconcilable with Asian nationalism in the light of its preference for non-alignment. In addition, Bandung created an opportunity to make personal contact with African leaders.

**Communist
China's
motives**

Communist China's motives were aimed primarily at the attainment of international recognition for Mao Zedong's regime and support for its membership of the UN where it hoped to replace the Republic of China (Taiwan). After the split with Russia, the Chinese tried to create trouble for the Soviet Union and the conflict between them could be promoted more easily in Africa than elsewhere. This resulted from Communist China's belief that the Soviet Union had relegated them to a junior role in Africa while

they were not as anti-American as Beijing expected them to be. The Chinese communists even suspected the Soviets of a willingness to sacrifice them in Soviet efforts to improve relations with the Americans. To outdo the Kremlin, the Chinese moved further to the left than Moscow and gave their full support to all of Africa's liberation movements. The more revolutionary these movements were, the better – an uninhibited radicalism which the Soviets distrusted. Initially the blacks welcomed Communist China's anti-colonial voice but, as they attained their independence, Chinese insistence on subversion became less acceptable. The fact that the Chinese portrayed themselves as a non-European power that was also subjected to European imperialism compensated in some measure for this. To many blacks they were more likeable than the Russians and the Americans, despite the fact that they had less to offer financially and technically.

**Relations
with
Africa**

At Bandung, Zhou Enlai's contact with Nasser paved the way for Communist China's first relations with Africa, and an embassy was opened in Cairo in 1955. In 1956 the Chinese communists recognised Sudan's independence and the opening of a cultural mission there was followed soon afterwards by similar offices in Ethiopia, Morocco and Tunisia. China was the first to recognise the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) as the provisional government of Algeria. Sudan returned diplomatic recognition only after a coup there in 1959, and there was some discord in Algeria about Chinese aid in their struggle. Eventually Communist China disapproved of the terms of the agreement which brought the war between the Algerian nationalists and France to an end.

**West
Africa**

In West Africa the Chinese were hot on the heels of the Soviets, and in 1958 they made a particular point of publicising their recognition of Guinea, where there was a sizeable Chinese population. Ghana was recognised in the following year. Financial aid to both Ghana and Mali was much smaller than the Soviet offers had been, no doubt because of the continued economic crises that plagued China until 1961. But Chinese loans were repayable over longer periods and at a much lower interest rate. These grants were mere gestures, however, and when the Cultural Revolution broke out in 1966, only 15 per cent of the total Chinese credits were taken up. During the Congo crisis Lumumba was aided financially and China opposed all UN measures; the power's non-membership of the world body was mainly responsible for this attitude. Lumumba's fall was an obvious setback, which was further aggravated by the switch to Antoine Gizenga, who eventually made peace with Kasavubu. Continued Chinese aid to other rebellious groups had little effect. The foundation of the OAU in 1963 was detrimental to China's support for the liberation movements because the OAU's declared aim was to orchestrate the liberation of southern Africa from within Africa herself.

**Zhou
Enlai's
tour of
Africa**

Beijing had to review the position, and in 1963 Zhou Enlai undertook an extended tour of Africa. He announced specific principles upon which Chinese economic aid, aimed at the promotion of socialism and the destruction of capitalism, could be obtained. This did not prevent a rather cool reception in Cairo, where Nasser expressed himself in terms favourable to the Soviets. The Algerians had been somewhat restrained in their appreciation of Chinese support ever since the war of liberation. Ethiopia was rather cool because of Chinese support for the pro-Chinese element in the Somalian govern-

ment. In Somalia, Zhou Enlai made an enormous diplomatic blunder when he referred to the excellent revolutionary potential in Africa. This was a threat to almost all existing African rulers. His visits to Dar es Salaam, Kampala and Nairobi were cancelled because of unrest and Kenya even launched an anti-Mao campaign. Only Mali welcomed him.

Changing fortunes Early in 1964 China's fortunes changed to some extent. This was the result of diplomatic recognition by France, followed by that of francophone Africa (with the exception of the Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon). Between that year and 1978, the country's diplomatic missions in Africa grew from 15 to 40, but its continued preference for revolutionary groups prevented any smooth development. West Africa's military leaders all distrusted the Chinese and efforts in 1965 to hold a second Bandung Conference failed because the Western-oriented African states saw through Beijing's efforts to be nationalist and revolutionary simultaneously.

Burundi China's involvement in Burundi, where it wanted to fish in troubled waters, brought no dividends either. Tutsi survivors of the Hutu revolt in Rwanda were plotting a counter-coup with their Burundi kinsmen. This had no grounds for ideological communist support, but China backed the Tutsi expedition by training some Tutsi in Chinese forms of guerrilla warfare. Appalling massacres followed, and in Burundi, where Chinese meddling was viewed with suspicion, the government split into pro- and anti-Chinese factions. The anti-Chinese prime minister was murdered, and rumours had it that the Chinese were involved. The whole episode ended with the closing of China's short-lived diplomatic mission.

Congo-Brazzaville Involvement in the Congo-Brazzaville was slightly more successful. This African country was among those who recognised Communist China when France pointed the way, and a treaty of friendship which included an aid programme followed. In 1966 a military coup put an end to all this.

Cultural Revolution During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1968) China closed all its embassies except the one in Egypt. All diplomatic personnel was recalled for reform, and African students in China were sent home. Financial aid was cut back. After this, China's tactics changed, and it halted its efforts to create conflict between African states and the West. Instead China began to concentrate on outspoken anti-imperial states and institutions. China's most spectacular success came in Tanzania, one of Africa's most radical and anti-Western states.

Tanzania Communist China's relations with Tanzania date back to its independence and the army mutiny in 1964. Nyerere, who had to rely on British troops during this episode, turned to the Chinese to strengthen his army and the connection between the Tanzanian People's Army and China began. The two countries moved closer together, and after a visit to China, Nyerere was impressed by Chinese development programmes, which he regarded as suitable for Tanzania. A treaty of friendship was signed in 1965 and China's involvement in Tanzania's economy began in the following year. During the Cultural Revolution, China maintained relations with Tanzania, and in 1967 Nyerere introduced his version of Tanzanian socialism known as 'ujamaa'. This was an effort to change the

lifestyle and production methods of Tanzania's peasants to one of communal cooperation which had been inspired by the Chinese communes.

Tazara railway project

The Tazara railway – initially known as the Tanzam railway – was an even more spectacular manifestation of Chinese involvement in Africa. The railway was not a Chinese idea. In the days of European partition a line had been contemplated, and the Zambian president, Kenneth Kaunda, encouraged the idea of a railway connection with Dar es Salaam after his country had become independent, because this would have enabled Zambia to export its minerals directly. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and an economic mission of the UN turned down the idea as uneconomic before Zhou Enlai offered to build the line in 1964. Kaunda remained sceptical about the Chinese involvement: he preferred Anglo-Canadian investment, but when Rhodesia proclaimed UDI, his communication problems worsened and his regard for the British decreased.

Work commenced in 1970, and despite several stumbling blocks the railway was completed in 1975, two years before schedule. It became the property of the two African countries, who had to pay for it by 1982; 52 per cent of this debt had to be settled through the purchasing of Chinese products. This project, often portrayed as a model of foreign aid to Africa, soon ran into difficulties, though not of Chinese origin. Poor maintenance contributed to the decay while goods clogged at Dar es Salaam, and in 1978 Zambia had to turn to South Africa to help with the export of its copper. As a result, China's reputation suffered, and the ideological benefit derived from the construction was also minimal: the Tanzanians and Zambians protested against any Chinese ideological propaganda during the construction process.

Communist Chinese successes in Africa

Chinese successes were few and far between. China lacked air and shipping links with Africa, and mutual trade was negligible. Before the Cultural Revolution, diplomatic contact was modest, but after Communist China had attained membership of the UN, the position changed and it returned to Africa, stepping into the position that Taiwan had had to sacrifice – often where Communist China would have found it difficult to enter otherwise. These included pro-American states such as Ethiopia and Zaïre and others such as Uganda and Somalia who did in fact benefit financially from Communist China's involvement. Small projects like rice cultivation in Guinea, Mali and Botswana count among the limited successes Communist China had in Africa.

Broadcasting

Another form of propaganda is broadcasting, and China made use of Arabic broadcasts in Egypt at the time of the Suez crisis. Although the Chinese did not trail behind the Soviets in this respect, the content of their broadcasts was hollow, its main concern being to blacken the Soviets instead of promoting positive Chinese views. China's attempts at promoting a truly revolutionary influence failed; it simply backed the wrong groups. In Angola, for example, the Chinese backed all except the MPLA. This does not mean that Communist China's influence on the continent disappeared. Until 1974 Beijing hosted a constant stream of visitors from Africa who continued to see a confidant in China.

THE CUBAN INTERLUDE IN AFRICA

Cuban guerrillas

Cuba was too small for its dynamic leader, Fidel Castro, and when his efforts to export his ideology to Latin America failed, he turned to Africa, towards which he cherished a special feeling of kinship. His radicalism urged him to help Africa against all forms of imperialism, colonialism and capitalism. In 1961, a mere two years after the Cuban revolution, Castro despatched instructors to Ghana to train guerrillas. These Cubans provided military and technical aid and in 1963 another band of instructors went to Algeria. When this country became involved in a border war with Morocco, Castro stepped up his aid and sent military equipment including tanks as well as staff who could operate and maintain them. Unlike the Cubans in Ghana, who were not meant to get involved in any fighting, those in Algeria would have done so if hostilities had not ended before they reached the front. At this stage the combat units were withdrawn, but the training units remained until 1965 when Ben Bella was overthrown. Cuba was also involved in the Congo debacle when Che Guevara went to the aid of Lumumba's heirs with a small force. Mobutu's rise to power forced them to the Congo-Brazzaville while the troops in Ghana survived until 1966 when Nkrumah fell from power.

This did not discourage Castro, he merely changed his tactics, and in the space of the many new presidencies and governments that took power in Africa, he set out to train security forces and bodyguards for them. This was done from Conakry and Brazzaville. Brazzaville became the home of the remnants of his abortive Congo expedition while Conakry, easily accessible from the Caribbean, not only had left-wing rulers, but was also suitably situated for involvement in Portuguese Guinea.

Anti-Portuguese activities

Anti-Portuguese activities became Cuba's main concern for the decade after 1964 when Che Guevara made his first contact with the MPLA and the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) in Guinea. During these years Cuba was also of some service to his hosts when he not only helped to foil a coup in the Congo-Brazzaville, but also organised an internal security service and personal bodyguard for Sekou Touré in Guinea. Eventually the Congo-Brazzaville leader was overthrown, but this setback was countered by the extension of Cuban services to Sierra Leone before Castro became involved in South Yemen, Oman and the Middle East against Israel. Events in Angola and Ethiopia eventually drew Cuba into the whirlpool of international politics in Africa with much more vigour.

Angolan war

During the Angolan war of liberation, the MPLA was regarded as a suitable leftist organisation to qualify for aid from Moscow. Because of lack of results, Moscow's backing began to dwindle, and in 1974 it was a mere trickle compared with the aid the rival liberation movement, the FLNA, received from various sources including Libya, Rumania, Zaïre and China, who also helped the third liberation movement, Unita. After the Portuguese abdication the FLNA became the beneficiary of all the American aid that had previously gone to the Portuguese. This enabled the FLNA almost to wipe out its rivals, and a desperate MPLA called upon Cuba and Sweden before Moscow promptly repaired its losses and rushed supplies to the MPLA via Conakry, Brazzaville and the sea: all of which tilted the scales in favour of Agostinho Neto's movement. China then

silently withdrew because she could not match the Soviets, and Rumania did the same when it saw that Moscow's client was winning. The MPLA's position was still not safe, because the United States and South Africa, both unwilling to see a pro-Soviet government in power in Angola, stepped in.¹³ Castro then intervened to save his personal friend, to whom he had given a measure of support for years before.¹⁴

Cuban aid

Cuban aid started to arrive from April 1975. This gradually increased until the first combat troops arrived in November, by which time the South African invasion began to threaten both the MPLA and Castro's men. Castro did not hesitate. His hatred for South Africa and capitalism prevailed despite the heavy odds which extended involvement in Angola entailed. To succeed he needed Soviet encouragement and finance and, since this was available, Castro stepped up his stake in Angola. What followed was a shifting of men and material reminiscent of the American move to North Africa and Europe during the Second World War. The whole undertaking was a gamble that succeeded and ensured a victory for Neto over South Africa and its nervous American counterpart. Neto's domestic position, however, remained uncertain, and this forced the Cubans to stay, something Castro had not bargained for – he wanted to withdraw in March 1976 – a few months before the Soviets signed a twenty-year friendship treaty with Angola. This focused on their mutual struggle against imperialism, colonialism and racism and included cooperation in the military field, but excluded any Soviet undertaking to defend Angola.¹⁵

Soviet and Cuban involvement

After an initial Soviet and Cuban cutback, their involvement began to increase from 1977 when support was generally stepped up to reach a climax in October 1988. At this stage up to 60 000 Soviet-allied troops were in Angola. Involvement of this magnitude was necessary because of Unita's persistence and South Africa's continued success against Swapo insurgents, who were often pursued into southern Angola. The Reagan government's global strategy against communism during the 1980s was another contributing factor.

Soviet influence

In November 1983 the Soviets changed their attitude and warned South Africa against the extent of its direct and indirect involvement in Angola – they had prior knowledge of a major incursion South Africa was about to undertake into southern Angola. The Kremlin was equally concerned about Unita's successes against their client, the MPLA. Although Unita could not overcome the MPLA, its successes badly affected the Soviet prestige. The result was an escalation of Soviet–Cuban involvement after January 1984, when the Cubans began to fly Angolan aircraft and improved arms and equipment appeared on the battle front. The new strategy was to wipe out Unita in a limited conventional war, but the combined Angolan–Cuban–Russian force failed to remove Unita from its headquarters at Jamba. Campaigns such as these were repeated every dry season after 1985, but when American anti-aircraft Sting missiles became available to Unita in 1986, Unita began to improve its position.

Soviet military offensive

Soviet tactics changed again in 1987. Despite Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's proclaimed preference for solving regional conflicts through negotiation, he launched a massive military offensive in Angola, including modern equipment and some of the top

Soviet generals. The country's oil and diamond reserves were simply too important to relinquish. This time South Africa became the main target, and the onslaught against Unita was also increased. South Africa was forced into greater involvement and lost some of its irreplaceable Mirage fighter aircraft. There was also a rumour of rebellion among the South West African Territorial Force, who were reportedly refusing to fight. This implied the increased use of white troops in future campaigns.¹⁶

In spite of mutual differences between Angola and its Cuban and Soviet allies, they agreed on action against South Africa and Unita. After a visit to Moscow in November 1987, Castro sent Cuba's best troops to Angola and the Cubans warned South Africa not to come to Unita's aid unless it was prepared to be attacked. On 10 December 1987 the Angolan president announced that these troops had started to patrol the border with South West Africa (Namibia) and they would engage the South Africans if they encountered them. Numerous Soviet and Vietnamese advisors moved to the south as what some claim to be the greatest land battle in southern African history began. In January 1988 more Cubans were thrown into the fray; they defeated South Africa, who then had no alternative other than the negotiating table.

South African withdrawal

In accords signed at the UN in December 1988, Angola's security was guaranteed, and the way was opened for Namibia's long-awaited independence. South African troops would withdraw from both Angola and Namibia while a timetable was set for a Cuban withdrawal from Angola.¹⁷ In 1990 this agreement was contravened by the Cubans, who launched another spring attack against Jamba, Unita's headquarters, but during 1990 the accords were put into effect – at the time when the backbone of the MPLA, the Soviet Union, itself began to crumble.

THE SUPERPOWERS AND AFRICA'S STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

Strategic regions

Africa's strategic significance involved it in international politics and complicated the continent's preference for non-alignment. North and Northeast Africa between the Algerian harbour town of Mers el-Kebir in the west and Mombasa in Kenya, as well as its hinterland, were deeply involved in superpower politics by the 1980s. Along the Mediterranean coast, Mers el-Kebir was of cardinal strategic importance. Ever since the days of the Turks, any power in control of that harbour controlled most of the Mediterranean. After the Second World War the Americans had denoted a special geopolitical significance to the area.¹⁸ Another important strategic region in the Mediterranean was Suez, but control here afforded dominance of a more limited part of the Mediterranean and involved the interests of the North African states. Egypt's interests were bound to the east as well as the Mediterranean while Morocco looked in the opposite direction towards the Atlantic Ocean and the western Mediterranean. Algeria, Tunisia and Libya were, as it were, caught in the middle of this region.

Egypt

Since the Second World War, Morocco had been under American influence whereas Nasser's Egypt was much more closely involved with the Soviet Union – as suggested by the Russo-Egyptian Entente of the 1950s, which gave the Russians some facilities at Alexandria. This was seen as a potential threat to the West, but it did not prevent the

United States from controlling the eastern Mediterranean in much the same way as in the western region of that ocean. After Nasser's death, neither Anwar el-Sadat nor Husni Mubarak sustained as close a relationship with the Soviets as Nasser did.

- Algeria** In the Maghrib, Algeria, radicalised by the war of liberation, embarked on a leftist socialist course, but refused to become a puppet of the Kremlin. Algeria regarded its relations with the Soviet Union as no more than friendly. Relations with France were also cordial and correct, especially after the French evacuated Mers el-Kebir in 1968, nine years earlier than had been specified in the peace treaty of 1962, which ended the war between Algeria and France. Morocco was Algeria's main foreign concern, and in 1963 war broke out as a result of a border dispute. Their hostility was of a territorial and economic nature, while ideology and history played a role too. Hassan II, the king of Morocco, ruled very autocratically, and this was unacceptable in socialist Algeria. Conflicting claims to mineral riches in the region also added to the unpleasantness and Algeria supported the Polisario Front in the former Spanish Rio de Oro.
- Libya** Despite Libya's claims of non-alignment and the fact that local circumstances dictated matters, Libya followed a far stronger foreign policy than Algeria. Libya distrusted Egypt because Nasser harboured ideas of incorporating the area into the Egyptian fold and his successor, Sadat, who came to power a year after Muammar al-Qadhafi's coup in Libya, was hostile towards the kind of socialism Qadhafi preferred.
- Qadhafi's foreign policy** Qadhafi soon took steps that did not endear him to other powers who had interests in the region. The Americans were expelled from a base which his predecessor, King Idris, had granted to them; he gave obvious support to subversive movements where he could; he changed Libya into the biggest harbinger of Russian arms outside Eastern Europe; he intervened in the Chadian civil war and created the notion that he was building a Muslim empire that would stretch as far as Sudan, Zaïre and Gabun. All of this was based on the income Libya attained from its only source, oil, which is extremely vulnerable in a fluctuating market. During the seventies this market flourished, but in the 1980s the position changed, prices dropped and the Oil Producing and Export Countries (Opec) cut back on output and prices to stabilise the market. Qadhafi was caught off-balance and began to run short of cash, jeopardising his development projects.
- Strained relations** Qadhafi blamed the USA for his misfortunes, and also accused the Americans, Egyptians and Sudan of involvement in an aborted coup against his regime early in 1981. With relations already strained, tension heightened when the Americans shot down two Libyan planes over the Gulf of Sirte in August, but after the assassination of Sadat in October, relations were better. Despite some success against the rivals of his friend Goukouni Oueddei, Qadhafi withdrew his forces from Chad. He was experiencing serious economic problems and shifted the blame for this from the Americans and the Egyptians to the Americans and the Saudis who purportedly glutted the market with oil to make the Libyan product unsaleable. To the Reagan administration, who put a high premium on anti-communist actions globally, Libya was the home of world terrorism, which not only threatened world peace, but made him a tool in the hands of

the Kremlin. The Soviets, however, adopted an amenable attitude towards Qadhafi. They remained aloof from his socialist ideas, but were willing to supply him with arms for cash. When Qadhafi ran out of money the Soviets became less accommodating and Qadhafi, lagging on payments, was anxious to negotiate a revised deal. Moscow was in no mood for this and insisted on payment. This was possibly because they attached no specific value to his allegiance, or because they feared an open onslaught from the United States, something which in all probability they would have liked to avoid. An empty-handed Qadhafi turned to China in 1982 while his relations with the United States continued to deteriorate. This antagonism was also extended to include Britain – especially after Libyan diplomats had killed a British policewoman during riots at the Libyan embassy in London. To the Americans, Qadhafi was the source of world terrorism and they would have liked nothing better than to bring about his fall. In April 1986 Libyan–American hostility led to the bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi with the compliance of Britain and America’s Nato allies. This failed to remove Qadhafi from power and he turned to more discreet acts of terrorism.

Rio de Oro Both Libya and Algeria supported the Polisario Front against Morocco. Spain withstood UN demands to withdraw from Rio de Oro until 1975, when it wished to hand the colony to Morocco and Mauritania, hoping that the region would remain dependent on Spain. Morocco and Mauritania preferred to partition Rio de Oro: Morocco in order to lay hands on its valuable phosphate deposits and Mauritania in the hope of preventing the development of a Greater Morocco which would dominate it. Algeria wanted to leave the choice of their future status in the hands of the indigenous population. Spain eventually yielded to Moroccan and Mauritanian pressure and the region was divided between them. There was dissatisfaction among those who preferred that, in accordance with the principle laid down by the OAU, Rio de Oro should remain intact and become a new state, known as the Sahrawi Democratic Arab Republic. They had Algerian and Libyan backing, and in 1976 this state was brought into being in Tripoli.

Morocco Two years later its forces drove Mauritania from the area it held, but Morocco proved to be more difficult. Although Hassan could hardly afford the troops he pushed into the region, he was astute enough to involve his ally from the days of the independence struggle, the United States. The opportunity arose in 1982, after the disaster with the American hostages in Teheran and the United States decision to create the Rapid Deployment Force which could be deployed in the Middle East under short notice. This force needed Morocco as a base while the Saudis, who had their own reasons to bolster Hassan in the camp of Arab moderates, joined in and provided the money. The Americans and the Saudis paid for the French arms Hassan needed in his war in exchange for the area’s phosphates, while broad strategic considerations – including the threat which the disturbances in Portugal and Spain in the early 1970s posed for United States air-bases there – compelled the Americans to persist in their support for Morocco. The Soviet Union performed some delicate diplomatic tactics to avoid any clash between its support for Sahrawi self-determination and Morocco, with whom it had important commercial links.¹⁹

- Egypt** In the Middle East the struggle was more intense, and it involved all African states that had contact with the Arabian peninsula, the Red Sea and the coast of the Indian Ocean. Egypt, Sudan and Somalia, as well as Kenya and Ethiopia, became part of a moving front where the superpowers manoeuvred to manipulate the situation to their advantage. After the American refusal to finance the construction of the Aswan Dam, and the Suez crisis, Egypt became dependent on the Soviet Union for arms and money to finance development projects. The two states did not have much in common, however, and relations were built on personal contact between their leaders, Nasser and Khrushchev, both of whom believed that this was the only way to bridge the inherent differences. This relationship barely survived Nasser's death and Khrushchev's demotion, and in 1972 Sadat dramatically evicted 20 000 Russians from Egypt at a week's notice. This clearly demonstrated the incompatibility of the two states, because Egypt only needed the support and financial aid from one rich Arab state to sustain a foreign policy free of superpower intervention.
- Sudan** Sudan was in a similar position, initially preferring to hold the superpowers at a distance. In 1969 this changed when General Jaafar Nimeiri seized power in a military coup. Nimeiri leaned towards Qadhafi and the Soviet Union to such an extent that the Kremlin foresaw a bloc of leftist states stretching from Tripoli and the central Mediterranean region through Sudan to the Red Sea. Sudanese nationalism prevented this, although Nimeiri remained in power. Accordingly, Sudan's foreign policy took a more obscure path of internationalism rather than being purposefully leftwing or non-aligned.
- Ethiopia** Although both Sudan and Egypt border on the western shores of the Red Sea, Eritrea or Ethiopia has the key to the significance of this region because it holds the southern part of this coastline. This part of the Red Sea coast gives direct access to the Middle East and the Indian Ocean, and the superpower to whom Ethiopia (who has controlled the territory since the Second World War) grants bases has a direct influence in the region. Until the 1970s the United States enjoyed Ethiopia's favour. Thereafter it switched its preference to the Soviet Union.
- Unrest** Ethiopia was a feudal state, but by 1974 the poverty generated by this system sparked student unrest and a military coup in which General Mengistu Haile Mariam took control. His dictatorship was soon severely tested by an uprising among the Oromo (Galla), the Somali invasion and a more intensive Eritrean war of separation. Mengistu turned to the Soviets and the result was 'the most flamboyant and most impressive invasion of Africa by an outside power since the Second World War',²⁰ very reminiscent of the British invasion of Egypt in 1882 because its basic motive had nothing whatsoever to do with African politics. The Soviets had two reasons, both extraneous, for helping Mengistu. First, the Horn was geographically important as regards the Middle East and the Indian Ocean. Second, the Kremlin supposed that the United States would not react in any way, even in the face of such vast Soviet involvement and in spite of the fact that it was already involved in Somalia.
- Somalia** Moscow's link with Somalia dates from 1963 when it provided military aid to President Said Barre's predecessors. Barre grabbed power in 1969 and in 1974, when Ethiopia also

experienced a military coup, Barre and the Soviets made a new agreement in Moscow. All Somalia's debts were cancelled and construction was started on a naval base at Berbera and a communications centre. These moves, in addition to improved relations with Algeria and Libya, more than compensated for the setback Moscow had suffered in Egypt in 1972, when Sadat had barred them from his country. In 1974 Mengistu opened another new door for Moscow – this time a geopolitical one, since Barre was not the ideological ally they were looking for. But the Soviets bided their time and stepped into the picture only when Somalia and Eritrea almost brought Mengistu to its knees. The Kremlin was thinking in terms of an alliance with both Northeast African countries, but this was prevented by Mengistu's refusal to honour his promises to the non-Christian inhabitants of the region and Barre's realisation that Mengistu's attitude provided an opportunity to invade Ethiopia under the pretext that he was helping the Somalis inside Ethiopia. The Soviets had to make a choice and they opted for Mengistu. Cubans (some of whom came from Angola) and an impressive airlift of arms from South Yemen saved Mengistu.

Eritrea Soon the Soviets had to repeat this act in order to save Mengistu from the Eritreans. Ethiopia's access to the Red Sea was the crucial factor. After the Second World War, first the British, then the Americans and from 1975 on the Soviets, regulated their relations with Eritrea in terms of their position in Ethiopia. In 1952 Eritrea became an autonomous part of a federation with Ethiopia. In 1953 the United States made a defence agreement with Ethiopia in which it provided military aid and training. The United States also acquired the use of the abandoned British communications centre at Kagnaw which lies in Eritrea near its capital, Asmara. Since the Americans regarded this facility as being of cardinal importance in its global strategy against the Soviet Union, it was developed to become the biggest of its kind in the world. But there were other factors in the scenario. The Ethiopians had never respected the 1952 agreement about Eritrea's status and their pretext to annex the region completely led to renewed military reaction. Despite its American military hardware, Ethiopia could not bring this region under control.

Soviet protectorate This involved the Israelis, who wanted to see the Red Sea coast under friendly Ethiopian rule. More than half of the Eritreans were Muslim and the danger was that they could side with the Arabs and impede Israeli shipping at the southern Israeli port of Eilat. The Ethiopians enjoyed the support of the United States and some of its friends. As the war escalated the Eritreans, with support from Cuba, Libya, South Yemen and Saudi Arabia, overcame their differences. By 1977–1978 they threatened the regime in Addis Ababa. Then the Kremlin stepped in with massive reinforcements. They forced the Cubans to change sides and South Yemen and Libya withdrew from the struggle. This turned the tide against Eritrea and the central government in Ethiopia became a Soviet protectorate.

Effect upon US These Russian successes did not affect the position of the United States in the Indian Ocean, where it had taken control from the British in about 1971 with the construction of a naval base on Diego Garcia. The Soviet fleet, which functioned from Vladivostok, was no match for the Americans and the use of satellite communication, the takeover

of Russian bases in Somalia, and the use of Mombasa in Kenya compensated for the loss of Kagnew in Eritrea. In 1982 some Kenyans revolted against the government of President Daniel arap Moi because of the American presence in Mombasa, while the Mauritians claimed Diego Garcia. The American position was therefore fluid at the beginning of the 1980s.

**Position
of
super-
powers**

In the eighties the Russians centred their attention on Ethiopia. Ethiopian dependence on the Soviets was related to its need for Russian arms, a position which would change only if Ethiopia could come to some agreement with Somalia and Eritrea. The Americans had vested interests in Somalia and Kenya, where there was an intractable border dispute, and also in Djibouti, where the population was divided in loyalty towards Somalia and Ethiopia. Both superpowers were therefore in positions beset with difficulties – a situation which they accepted because of the region's strategic importance in the relentless struggle for global dominance.

MINERALS AND AFRICA'S STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

**Strate-
gic
mine-
rals**

In Africa the regions where strategic minerals are found are situated mainly in the southern but also in the northwestern part of the continent. The value of strategic minerals (including oil and mineral ores) is not confined to possible military significance; they are much sought after for peaceful purposes by both capitalist and communist countries. Countries in possession of such minerals have some economic power but are exposed to the attention of outside powers which is not always to their benefit. The former Eastern European countries were more interested in Africa's minerals than the Soviets. Countries such as Poland, Bulgaria, Rumania and especially Eastern Germany had invested large sums of money in these undertakings and had also negotiated many treaties of economic cooperation and joint enterprises to exploit these minerals. This was done primarily through Comecon, of which Mozambique became the first African associate in 1978. The Soviet Union's attitude was different because it did not depend on Africa's minerals. To the Soviets these minerals had secondary strategic significance: they preferred the termination of these exports to Nato countries whereas the African states benefited through increased exports to the Western countries. The United States is the Western state which is most dependent on these products, but neither it nor its Nato partners really feared that the African states would cut their supply in a crisis. Local unrest in Africa was a more serious obstacle. The war in Morocco could influence phosphate and iron ore supplies but it affected all potential clients, both communist and capitalist.

Zaire

Zaire, one of the sole suppliers of cobalt to the United States, is of special significance. When rebels in Shaba occupied a mine which generated half the world's output of cobalt in 1978, the price of the commodity quadrupled. This disturbance induced foreign intervention on two occasions: internal revolts were put down because of threats to the flow of minerals to Western countries and the lives of Europeans. Moroccan troops, using American arms, French aircraft and Saudian money, saved Belgians and Germans whose lives were in jeopardy. French and Belgian paratroopers repeated this exercise during a second revolt a year later.

French influence France continued to recognise Africa's importance in world politics after decolonisation. It actually set an example in dealing with Africa which the superpowers later followed. Although the former French federal blocs had been dissolved at independence, they were reconstituted into an economic union with the former mother country, which strengthened ties between them. France linked them with the European Economic Community (EEC), which provided economic aid, and 18 of these states shared in the EEC development fund from 1964. In exchange for this, French troops remained in Africa from Senegal in the west to Djibouti in the east. In the early 1980s, the Ministry for Cooperation and Development dispensed aid in expectation of increased French influence and exports. Paris was made the centre for meetings between African leaders and all the presidents of the Fifth Republic visited the continent at various times. As pointed out above, Zaïre was helped twice; aid was also given to save pro-French governments in the Cameroon and Gabon in the 1960s. Africa remained important from the French point of view, because France regarded its influence in sub-Saharan Africa as proof of its claim to world power status.²¹

Chad In Chad the French did not hesitate to become involved. When Africa's largest and poorest state became independent in 1960, the nomadic Muslim pastoralists of the north were dominated by the agriculturally oriented Christians of the south. Uprisings soon followed in the north and east because of heavy taxation and anti-Muslim discrimination. In 1964 a one-party system was introduced. This was the forerunner of civil war, because all attempts to reach some sort of understanding with the Muslims failed. By 1967 the north was in open rebellion, which escalated into warfare three years later. After Qadhafi came into power in Libya, he began to intervene in Chadian affairs mainly because he had designs on a piece of borderland which Benito Mussolini had annexed to Libya in earlier years and which was rumoured to be rich in uranium. In 1973 Qadhafi seized the land after efforts to buy it from Chad had failed. Six years later Goukouni Queddei, a northern Muslim, came to power in Chad and decided to unite with Libya. This sparked a new civil war. Anti-Qadhafian powers, with Egyptian and Sudanese support, were eventually victorious before Queddei entered the struggle again from Libya.

Libyan involvement in Chad The Libyan interference placed France's involvement in a better light in the eyes of other African countries. Because of rumours about Qadhafi's large Muslim empire and intrigues in many other countries, he was seen as the villain. Libyan involvement was also a problem for France, because it could easily have been seen as an American anti-Libyan stooge. Despite this, the French continued to help Hissan Habre, Chad's anti-Libyan leader, and started negotiations with Libya in order to reassure France's friends in Africa about Qadhafi's intentions. France's aim was the maintenance of Chad's territorial integrity. Unlike the United States, France saw no reason to destroy Libya who, like Chad, had no strategic or economic importance and reached a peace accord with Libya in 1988, a year after Chad confirmed an alliance with the United States.²² United States–French differences demonstrated that Africa could command the interest of the great powers, but this changed as the 1980s drew to a close and the global struggle between East and West diminished. France unilaterally denounced future military aid to Chad in June 1990 and declared its support for the introduction

of free elections in Africa. Hissen Habre was one of several African rulers who was sceptical of the change in the French attitude because he saw himself as a bulwark against Qadhafi's influence. Habre's heavy-handed rule in southern Chad sealed his fate. When a coup took place against him, French troops remained in their barracks.²³

**End of
rivalry**

Superpower rivalry in Africa came to an end with the demise of the communist bloc and dwindling American interest in the early 1990s. African foreign policy, or the foreign policies of 52 African states, can no longer rely on the global struggle of the superpowers to obtain arms or any form of foreign aid from them. Western capital and technology found a 'new frontier' in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States which threw off the communist yoke and opted for a market economy and democracy. Africa's economy has been damaged by its own graft, mismanagement, misrule and ineptitude and the West has become disenchanted with the continent. In the UN anti-colonialism has lost its verve – as has the anti-apartheid drive with the decline of the National Party government in South Africa. In the last decade of the century the African states can only try to focus the attention of the international community upon the continent's economic plight²⁴ because non-alignment, at least between East and West, is no longer relevant.

Notes

- 1 P. Calvocoressi, *World politics since 1945*, p. 102.
- 2 Quoted in P. J. Vatikiotis, *The history of modern Egypt from Muhammad to Mubarak*, p. 391.
- 3 G. W. Shepherd Jr, *Nonaligned black Africa*, pp. 3 and 16.
- 4 G. Lundestad, *East, West, North, South: Major developments in international politics, 1945–1990*, p. 88.
- 5 P. Calvocoressi, *Independent Africa and the world*, p. 93.
- 6 F. Pedler, *Main currents of West African history, 1940–1978*, p. 97.
- 7 R. D. Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*, pp. 69–74 and 164.
- 8 Pedler, *Main currents of West African history*, p. 127.
- 9 Lundestad, *East, West, North, South*, p. 99.
- 10 D. Birmingham, *Kwame Nkrumah*, pp. 99–100.
- 11 F. R. Metrowich, *Africa in the sixties*, p. 95.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 96, and Pedler, *Main currents*, p. 148.
- 13 See chapter 16.
- 14 Z. Laidi, *The superpowers and Africa: The constraints of a rivalry, 1960–1990*, pp. 62–63.
- 15 O. Abegunrin, 'Angola and the Soviet Union since 1975', *Journal of African Studies*, 14(1), 1987, p. 278.
- 16 B. MacLellan, 'Never quiet on the Western Front: Angola, Namibia, South Africa and the Big Powers', *Searchlight South Africa*, 1(1), 1988, p. 25.

- 17 D. Deutschmann, *Angola and Namibia accords: Defeating the South Africans was decisive for Africa*, p. 1.
- 18 A. Layachi, *The United States and North Africa: A cognitive approach to foreign policy*, p. 18.
- 19 S. Baynham, 'The war in Western Sahara', *Africa Insight*, 21(1), pp. 53–54.
- 20 Calvocoressi, *Independent Africa*, p. 75.
- 21 T. Chafer, 'French African policy: Towards change', *African Affairs*, 91(362), January 1991, p. 40.
- 22 *Africa south of the Sahara*, 1990, pp. 369–370.
- 23 Chafer, 'French African policy', p. 50, and S. Decalo, 'Back to square one: the re-democratization of Africa', *Africa Insight*, 21(3), 1991, p. 156.
- 24 O. Aluko, 'The foreign policies of African states in the 1990's', *The Round Table*, 317, January 1991, pp. 35–36.

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Appendix

Countries of Africa

Official name	Capital	Date of independence and former/present ruling power
ALGERIA , Democratic and Popular Republic of	Algiers	3 July 1962 – France
ANGOLA , People's Republic of	Luanda	11 November 1975 – Portugal
BENIN , Republic of	Porto Novo	1 August 1960 – France
BOTSWANA , Republic of	Gaborone	30 September 1966 – Britain
BURKINA FASO , Popular Democratic Republic of	Ouagadougou	5 August 1960 – France
BURUNDI , Republic of	Bujumbura	1 July 1962 – Belgium
CAMEROON , Republic of	Yaounde	1 January 1960 – France
CAPE VERDE , Republic of	Praia (São Tiago Island)	5 July 1975 – Portugal
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	Bangui	13 August 1960 – France
CHAD , Republic of	N'Djamena	11 August 1960 – France
COMOROS , Federal Islamic Republic of the	Moroni (Grand Comoro Island)	6 July 1975 – France
CONGO , Republic of the	Brazzaville	15 August 1960 – France

Official name	Capital	Date of independence and former/present ruling power
CÔTE D'IVOIRE , Republic of	Abidjan/Yamous-soukro	7 August 1960 – France
DJIBOUTI , Republic of	Djibouti	27 June 1977 – France
EGYPT , Arab Republic of	Cairo	28 February 1922 – Britain
EQUATORIAL GUINEA , Republic of	Malabo (Bioko Island)	12 October 1968 – Spain
ETHIOPIA , People's Democratic Republic of	Addis Ababa	Since early times
GABON , Republic of	Libreville	17 August 1960
GAMBIA , Republic of The	Banjul	18 February 1965 – Britain
GHANA , Republic of	Accra	6 March 1957 – Britain
GUINEA , Republic of	Conakry	2 October 1958 – France
GUINEA-BISSAU , Republic of	Bissau	10 September 1974 – Portugal
KENYA , Republic of	Nairobi	12 December 1963 – Britain
LESOTHO , Kingdom of	Maseru	4 October 1966 – Britain
LIBERIA , Republic of	Monrovia	26 July 1847
LIBYA (Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)	Tripoli	24 December 1951 – Britain/France
MADAGASCAR , Democratic Republic of	Antananarivo	26 June 1960 – France
MALAWI , Republic of	Lilongwe	6 July 1964 – Britain
MALI , Republic of	Bamako	20 June 1960 – France
MAURITANIA , Islamic Republic of	Nouakchott	28 November 1960 – France

Official name	Capital	Date of independence and former/present ruling power
MAURITIUS , State of	Port Louis	12 March 1968 – Britain
MOROCCO , Kingdom of	Rabat	2 March 1956 – France/Spain
MOZAMBIQUE , Republic of	Maputo	25 June 1975 – Portugal
NAMIBIA , Republic of	Windhoek	21 March 1990 – South Africa
NIGER , Republic of	Niamey	3 August 1960 – France
NIGERIA , Federal Republic of	Abuja/Lagos	1 October 1960 – Britain
RWANDA , Republic of	Kigali	1 July 1962 – Belgium
SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE , Republic of	São Tomé	12 July 1975 – Portugal
SENEGAL , Republic of	Dakar	20 June 1960 – France
SEYCHELLES , Republic of	Victoria (Mahe Island)	29 June 1976 – Britain
SIERRA LEONE , Republic of	Freetown	27 April 1961 – Britain
SOMALIA , Democratic Republic of	Mogadishu	1 July 1960 – Britain/Italy
SOUTH AFRICA , Republic of	Pretoria/ Cape Town	31 May 1910 – Britain
SPANISH NORTH AFRICA (Ceuta and Melilla)		Disputed territory
SUDAN , Democratic Republic of	Khartoum	1 January 1956 – Britain/Egypt
SWAZILAND , Kingdom of	Mbabane	6 September 1968 – Britain
TANZANIA , United Republic of	Dar es Salaam/ Dodoma	9 December 1961 – Britain

Official name	Capital	Date of independence and former/present ruling power
TOGO, Republic of	Lome	27 April 1960 – France
TUNISIA, Republic of	Tunis	20 March 1956 – France
UGANDA, Republic of	Kampala	9 October 1962 – Britain
WESTERN SAHARA	El Aaiun	Disputed territory
ZAÏRE, Republic of	Kinshasa	30 June 1960 – Belgium
ZAMBIA, Republic of	Lusaka	24 October 1964 – Britain
ZIMBABWE, Republic of	Harare	18 April 1980 – Britain

Source: *Africa at a glance*, 1992, pp. 9–10.

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