

Imperialism in Africa

Historical Context: European imperialism in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries resulted in the carving up of areas of Africa and Asia into vast colonial empires. This was true for most of the continent of Africa. As imperialism spread, the colonizer and the colony viewed imperialism differently. They saw both positive and negative effects of imperialism.

Learning Targets:

- 1) I can analyze the political, economic, and social causes and consequences of 19th century European imperialism on local peoples in Africa.
- 2) I can describe the connection between imperialism and racism, including the social construction of race.

Essential Question: *What were the positive and negative effects of imperialism for the colonizer and the colony?*

Directions: Analyze the following documents and evaluate the new imperialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Africa. Answer the questions that follow each primary source.

Document 1: This excerpt is adapted from *Imperialism* by J.A. Hobson, a British scholar.

The period of imperialism has witnessed many wars. Most of these wars have been caused by attacks of white races upon so-called "lower races." They have resulted in the taking of territory by force. . . . The white rulers of the colonies live at the expense of the natives. Their chief work is to organize labor for their support. In the typical colony, the most fertile lands and the mineral resources are owned by white foreigners. These holdings are worked by natives under their direction. The foreigners take wealth out of the country. All the hard work is done by natives.

Question: What negative aspects of imperialism does this British scholar point out?

Document 2: Sekou Toure, an African nationalist, pointed out another negative aspect of imperialism.

Colonialism's greatest misdeed was to have tried to strip us of our responsibility in conducting our own affairs and convince us that our civilization was nothing less than savagery, thus giving us complexes which led to our being branded as irresponsible and lacking in self-confidence.

Question: What criticism of imperialism does this African offer?

Document 3: The resolution of the All-African People's Conference, held in Accra, Ghana in 1958, "condemns colonialism and imperialism" based on these premises.

Whereas all African peoples . . . deplore the economic exploitation of African people by Imperialist Countries, thus reducing Africans to poverty in the midst of plenty . . . Whereas fundamental human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of movement, freedom of worship, freedom to live a full and abundant life . . . are denied to Africans through the activities of Imperialists.

Question: What are the reasons this group condemned imperialism?

Document 4: George H.T. Kimble, in a 1962 New York Times Magazine article, "Colonialism: the Good, the Bad, the Lessons," gives his point of view.

. . . they [the colonial powers] failed to provide the African with sufficient [preparation] . . . None of the newly independent countries had enough skilled African administrators to run their own . . . [or] enough African technicians to keep the public utilities working. . . . And no country had an electorate that knew what independence was all about. . . . For all its faults, colonial government provided security of person and property in lands that had known little or either. . . . It was the colonial powers who were largely responsible for the opening of the region to the lumberman, miner, planter, and other men of means without whom its wealth would be continued to lie fallow [uncultivated].

Question: What does this author cite as negative effects of imperialism? What does he cite as positive effects of imperialism?

Document 5: This is an African proverb.

When the whites came to our country, we had the land and they had the Bible; now we have the Bible and they have the land.

Questions: What does this proverb imply about the effect of imperialism in Africa?

Document 6: This poem by David Diop is from an Anthology of West African Verse.

The White Man killed my father,
My father was proud.
The White Man seduced my mother,
My mother was beautiful.
The White Man burnt my brother
Beneath the noonday sun,

My brother was strong.
His hand red with black blood
The White Man turned to me;
And in the Conqueror's voice said,
"Boy! A chair, a napkin, a drink."

Question: What negative aspects of imperialism does David Diop present in this poem?

Document 7: This excerpt, adapted from *Balance Sheets of Imperialism* by Grover Clark, points out other negative aspects of imperialism.

The struggle for colonies does not result only in cash losses. There were also lives lost, wars fought, and hatreds aroused which threatened new wars. . . .Italy's trade with her colonies in 1894-1932 was worth 5,561 million lire [about \$1,100 million]. This was less than one percent of her total foreign trade in the same period. In fact, her expenditures on colonies for that time was 6,856 million lire. Obviously colonies cost more than they are worth in trade.

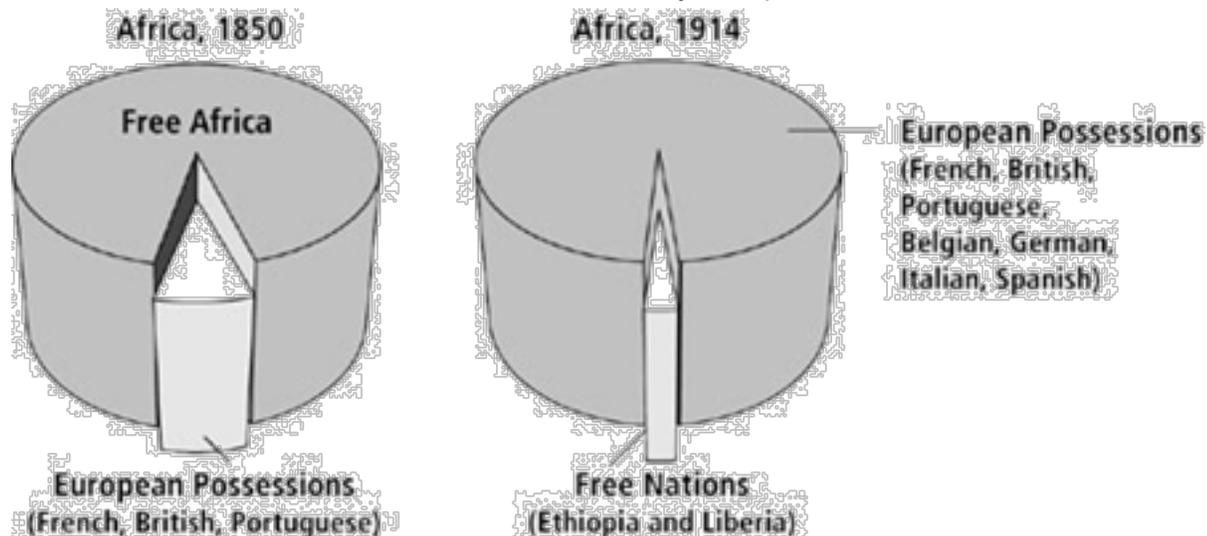
Question: What evidence does this author provide to show that colonies were a negative financial drain on the Europeans?

Document 8: Cecil Rhodes, quoted in *A Plague of Europeans: Westerners in Africa Since the Fifteenth Century* by David Killingray

"I contend that we are the first race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race. . . . I contend that every acre added to our territory provides for the birth of more of the English race, who otherwise would not be brought into existence. . . . I believe it to be my duty to god, my Queen and my country to paint the whole map of Africa red. . . . That is my creed, my dream and my mission."

Question: How did Cecil Rhodes use English nationalism to justify imperialism?

Document 9: Amount of African Land Controlled by Europeans



Question: How did European nationalism affect Africa?

Document 10: O. P. Austin, "Does Colonization Pay?" *The Forum* (1900)

"Modern progressive nations lying in the temperate zone seek to control "garden spots" in the tropics [mainly in Africa, Latin America, and Asia]. Under [the] direction [of the progressive nations], these places can yield tropical produce. In return, the progressive nations bring to the people of those garden spots the foodstuffs and manufactures they need. [Progressive nations] develop the territory by building roads, canals railways, and telegraphs. They can establish schools and newspapers for the colonies ... [and] give these people the benefit of other blessings of civilization which they have not the means of creating themselves."

Question: According to O. P. Austin, what benefits did the colonies receive from the "modern progressive nations"?

Document 11: Nnamdi Azikiwe, first president of independent Nigeria (1963–1966)

"There exists in colonial lands a rule which has a stranglehold on the country's economy. I regard the idea of imperialism as a crime against humanity, because it enables any part of the human race which is armed with modern scientific knowledge to rule over less fortunate sections of mankind, simply because the latter are unable to resist the force which supports such rule.

We demand the right to take over responsibility for the government of our country. We demand the right to be free to make mistakes and learn from our experience."

Question: What was Nnamdi Azikiwe's view of imperialism?

Document 12:



"Learning civilized ways is hard work"

Question: What did colonization mean for the native people?

Document 13: *Imperialism and World Politics*, Parker T. Moore, 1926

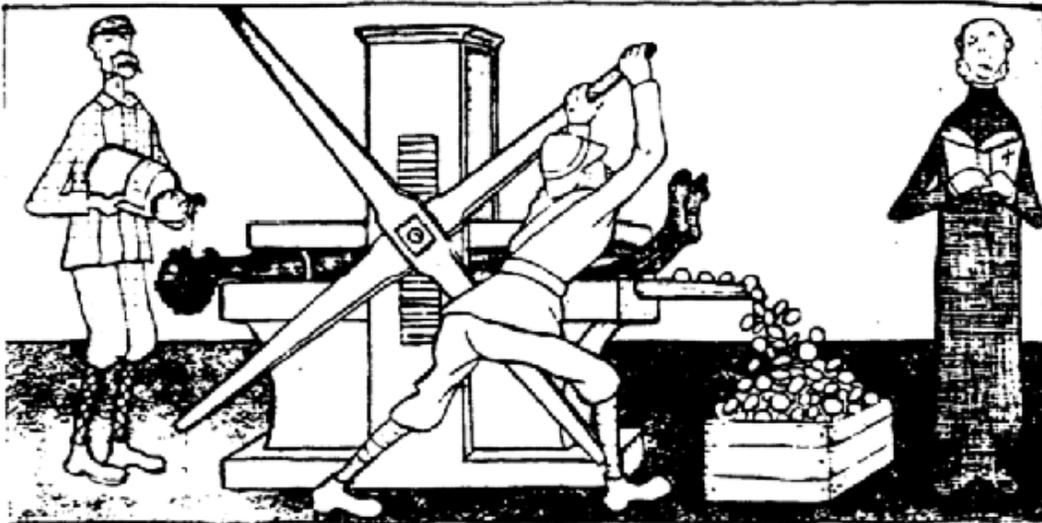
"To begin with, there are the exporters and manufacturers of certain goods used in the colonies. The makers of cotton and iron goods have been very much interested in imperialism. Their business interests demand that colonial markets should be opened and developed and that foreign competitors should be shut out. Such aims require political control and imperialism.

Finally, the most powerful of all business groups are the bankers. Banks make loans to colonies and backward countries for building railways and steamship lines. They also make loans to colonial plantation owners, importers, and exporters.

The imperialist business interests have powerful allies. Military and naval leaders believe strongly in extending the white man's rule over the 'inferior races,' To this company may be added another element—the missionary. Missionaries went forth to preach a kingdom beyond this world. But they often found themselves the builders of very earthly empires. . . . Last, but by no means least, let us add politicians to our list of empire builders."

Question: Who are the empire builders described in this passage?

Document 14: This German cartoon, published in the early 20th century, is entitled "Thus colonize the English."



Question: What is the point of view of this cartoonist about European imperialism?

Now write 1 - 2 paragraphs where you answer the the essential question for the day ...

What were the positive and negative effects of imperialism for the colonizer and the colony?