

The Age of Imperialism



Main Idea: Ignoring the claims of African ethnic groups, kingdoms & city state, Europeans established colonial claims.

Why it matters now: African nations continue to feel the effects of the colonial presence of 100 years ago.

The takeover of a country or territory by a stronger nation with the intent of dominating the political, economic & social life of the people of that nation is called **IMPERIALISM**

As late as 1880, Europeans controlled only 10% of the African continent and it was mainly on the coast. European travel into the interior on a large-scale basis was virtually impossible. They could not navigate African rivers that had so many rapids & drastically changing flows, until the introduction of the steam-powered riverboat.

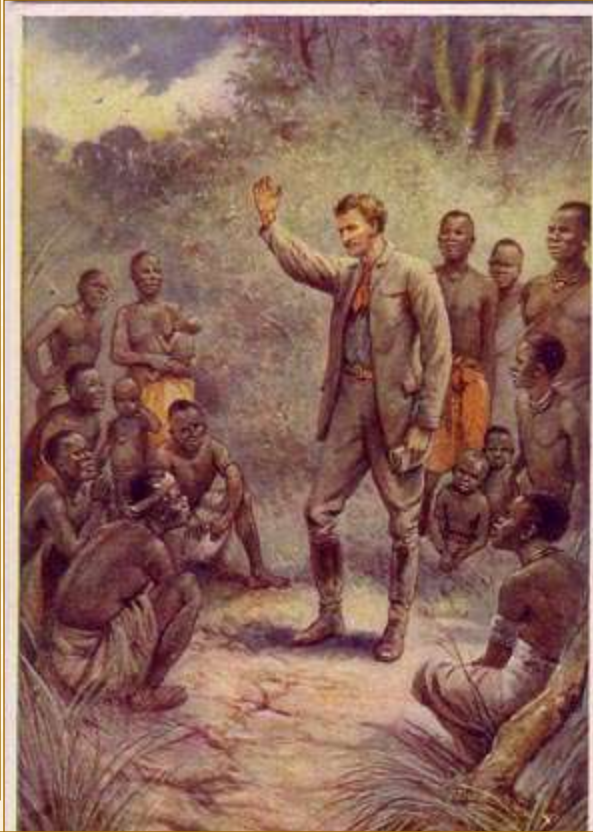
Those Europeans who did penetrate the interior of Africa tended to be explorers, missionaries or humanitarians who opposed the slave trade.





In the late 1860's, David Livingstone, a minister from Scotland, traveled with a group of Africans into central Africa. They were searching for the source of the Nile. When several years passed with no word from him or his party, people believed him to be dead.

An American newspaper hired reporter Henry Stanley to find Livingstone. In 1871, he found Livingstone on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Stanley's account of the meeting made headlines around the world.



In 1882, Stanley signed treaties with local chiefs of the Congo River valley. The treaties gave King Leopold II of Belgium personal control of these lands. Stanley did so through a combination of promises, threats & trickery. One of his methods when meeting a new chief, was to attach a buzzer to his hand which was linked to a battery. When the chief shook hands with Stanley he got a mild electric shock. This device convinced the chiefs that Stanley had superhuman powers. The agreements allowed the Belgians into the Congo to take its rich natural resources. Leopold claimed that his primary motive in establishing the colony was to abolish the slave trade. However, the Congolese were brutally treated. They were forced to build a railroad & collect ivory & rubber. As many as 10 million Congolese died between 1880 and 1910.



King Leopold II of
Belgium



King Leopold II & the
Belgian Congo

When news of the atrocities became public in 1908, the Belgian government took control of the colony and renamed it the Belgian Congo. Although the Belgian government improved working conditions slightly, it too was a harsh ruler & continued to extract natural resources. For years, the Congolese struggled to achieve independence.



The Belgium Congo was 80 times larger than Belgium itself. The Seizure of the Congo alarmed France. Earlier in 1882, the French had approved a treaty that gave France the north bank of the Congo River.

Soon Britain, Germany, Italy, Portugal & Spain were also claiming parts of Africa

The Industrial Revolution provided European countries with a need to add lands to their control because they searched for new markets & raw materials to improve their economies.

Europeans believed that the more land you control then the greater your national power is. Therefore, as the competition for colonies intensified, each country was determined to plant its flag on as much of the world as possible.



“All great nations in the fullness of their strength have desired to set their mark upon barbarian lands & those who fail to participate in this great rivalry will play a pitiable role in time to come.”

Heinrich von Treitschke- German historian

Europeans believed that those who were fittest for survival enjoyed wealth & success & were considered superior to others –
Social Darwinism – A THEORY BY CHARLES DARWIN ABOUT EVOLUTION & “SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST”

According to the theory, non-Europeans were considered to be on a lower scale of cultural & physical development because they did not have the technology that Europeans had. They also believed that they had the right & the duty to bring the results of their progress to other countries.

“I contend that we Britons are the finest race in the world, & the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for the human race...it is our duty to seize every opportunity of acquiring more territory & we should keep this one idea steadily before our eyes that more territory simply means more of the Anglo-Saxon race, more of the best, the most human, most honorable race the world possesses.”

Cecil Rhodes – A British Businessman



Cecil Rhodes

Other Contributing Factors to Imperialism:

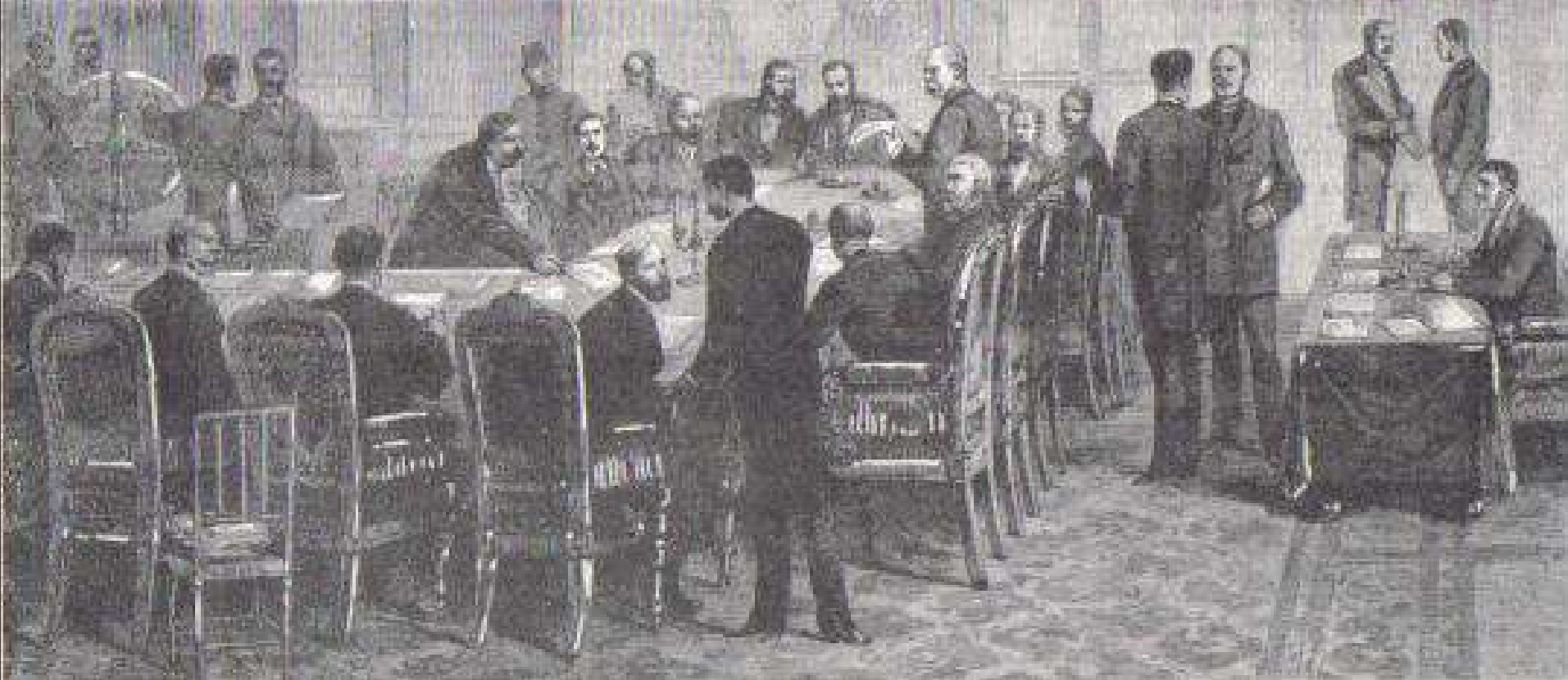
- Missionaries – who wanted to “Christianize” & “Westernize” & “Civilize” peoples Asia, Africa & the Pacific Islands
- European technological superiority – The Maxim gun, invented in 1889, the worlds first automatic machine gun.
- The steam engine – allowed easier travel upstream to establish bases of control in the African Continent.
- Railroads, cables, steamers – allowed close communications within a colony & its controlling nation.
- The drug **Quinine** – protected Europeans from the disease malaria, caused by mosquitoes.

Tribalism – Many Africans spoke different languages & they had different cultures, which caused them to fight amongst themselves over land, water & trade rights & as a result, they never become unified.

Europeans learned to play rival groups against each other.



The Scramble for Africa: Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 to Divide Africa



In November 1884, to prevent war among European countries, the imperial chancellor and architect of the German Empire, Otto von Bismarck, convened a conference of 14 states (including the United States) to settle the political partitioning of Africa. Of these fourteen nations, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Portugal were the major players in the conference, controlling most of colonial Africa at the time. They agreed that any European country could claim land in Africa by notifying other nations of their claims & showing they could control the area. The European nations divided the rest of the continent with little thought to how African peoples felt. No African ruler attended these meetings. By 1914 only Liberia & Ethiopia remained free from European control.



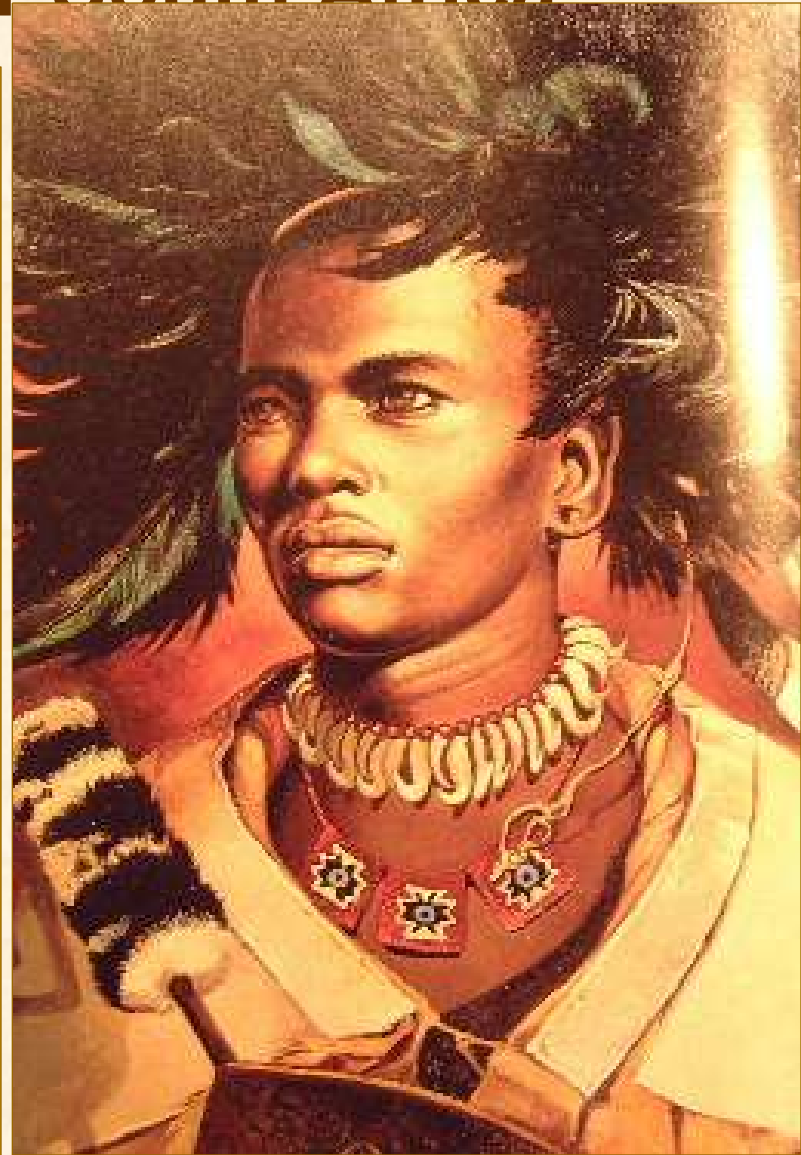
European businesses eventually developed cash-crop plantations to grow peanuts, palm oil, cocoa & rubber. These products displaced the food crops grown by farmers to feed their families.

The major source of wealth in Africa was the continent's rich mineral resources. The Belgian Congo contained untold wealth in copper & tin, but these were small in comparison to the gold & diamonds in South Africa.

3 groups clash over South Africa

1. Africans – From the late 1700's to the late 1800's, a series of local wars shook Africa. A Zulu Chief, Shaka Zulu, used highly disciplined warriors & good military organization to create a large centralized state.

His successors, however, were unable to keep the kingdom intact against the superior arms of the British invaders. In 1879, after Zulu King Cetshwayo refused to dismiss his army & accept British rule, the British invaded the Zulu nation. Although the Zulus used spears & shields against British guns, they nearly defeated the British army. In July 1879, however, the Zulus lost the Battle of Ulundi and their kingdom became controlled by the British.



2. The Dutch first came to the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 to establish a way station for their ships sailing between the Dutch East Indies & home. Dutch settlers known as Boers (Dutch for Farmers) gradually took over native Africans' land & established large farms. When the British took over the Cape Colony in the 1800's the 2 groups of settlers clashed over British policy regarding land & slaves.

In the 1830's, to escape the British, several thousand Boers began to move north, which caused them to clash with the Zulu & other African groups whose land they were taking.



When diamonds & gold were discovered in South Africa in the 1860's, outsiders from all over the world rushed in to make their fortunes. The Boers tried to keep the outsiders from gaining political rights.

An attempt to start a rebellion against the Boers failed. The Boers blamed the British & in 1899 the Boers took up arms against the British.



Cape of Good Hope



Black South Africans were also involved in the war. Some fought; others served as scouts, guards, drivers & workers. Many black South Africans were captured by the British & placed in concentration camps, where over 14,000 died.

The Boers launched commando raids & used guerrilla tactics against the British. The British then countered by burning Boer farms & imprisoning women & children in disease ridden concentration camps. Britain won the war. In 1902, the Boer republics were joined into a self-governing Union of South Africa controlled by the British.



Europeans used 4 techniques of control in Africa

Colony- a country or a region governed internally by a foreign power.

Protectorate- a country or territory with its own internal government but under the control of an outside power.

Sphere of Influence- An area in which an outside power claims exclusive investment of trading privileges.

Economic Imperialism- Independent but less developed nations controlled by private business interests rather than by other governments.

European rulers also needed to develop methods of day to day management of the colonies in Africa

Management Methods:

Indirect Control

- Local government officials were used
- Limited self-rule
- Goal: To develop future leaders
- Government institutions are based on European styles but may have local rules

Direct Control

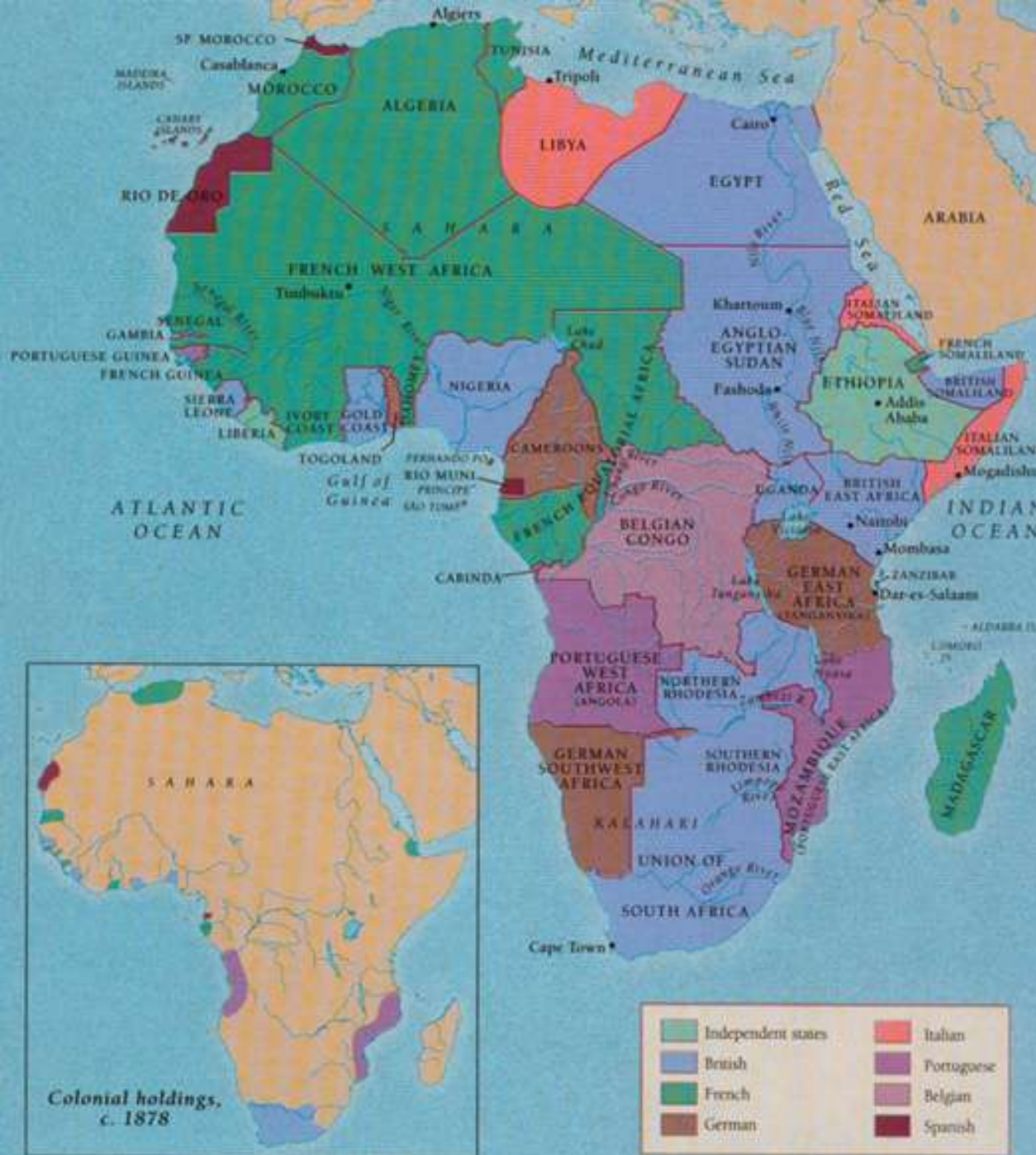
- Foreign officials brought in to rule
- No self-rule
- Goal: Assimilation
- Government institutions are based only on European styles

Across Africa, European attempts to colonize the lands were met with resistance. The contest between African states & European powers was never equal due to the European's superior arms.

Sometimes African societies tried to form alliances with the Euros so that the Euros would allow them to remain independent.

In some cases the Euros would help defeat the rivals, only to turn on their African allies.

All of these attempts ultimately failed, except for Ethiopia.





Ethiopia was the only African nation to successfully resist the Euros due to **Menelik II**. He became emperor of Ethiopia in 1889.

He managed to play the Italians, the French & the British against each other, all who were trying to control Ethiopia.

Menelik managed to build up a huge arsenal of modern weapons purchased from France & Russia. When he was about to sign a treaty with France, he discovered that the wording of the treaty was different in both his language (Amharic) & in Italian. In his language, it stated that he was giving up only a small portion of Ethiopia, but in the Italian language it stated that all of Ethiopia was going to be surrendered.

Menelik declared war in 1896. The battle was known as **THE BATTLE OF ADOWA**. Ethiopian forces outnumbered the French forces 196,000 to 25,000. Menelik managed to split the French forces in two & he along with another general attacked the French army successfully defeating them & maintaining their nations independence.

Impact of Colonial/European Rule

Positives:

- **Reduced local warfare**
- **Improved sanitation & brought hospitals & schools**
- **African products came to be valued on the international market**
- **Gained railroads, dams, telephone & telegraph lines**

Negatives:

- Africans lost control of their land
- Africans lost control of their independence
- Many Africans died of diseases such as smallpox
- Many Africans died in their resistance
- Famines resulted from the change to cash crops in place of food crops
- Africans lost their traditional culture
- Homes & property were transferred with little regard to their importance to the people
- Men were forced to leave their villages to find ways to support themselves & their families
- They had to work in mines on European owned farms or railroad building

Worldwide Views of Imperialism

The views of the Europeans themselves represented a wide range of political opinions & moral beliefs

Pros:

Because Europeans believe themselves to be a superior race, they are morally obligated to teach their way of life to the less fortunate.

Europeans achieve great status in their world of nations by the influence they exert over others.

Europeans help less advanced societies by providing education & technology

Cons:

Europeans fail to see what wisdom other ancient cultures can teach them.

The brutality with which Europeans rule contradicts their claim to be a “superior” culture.

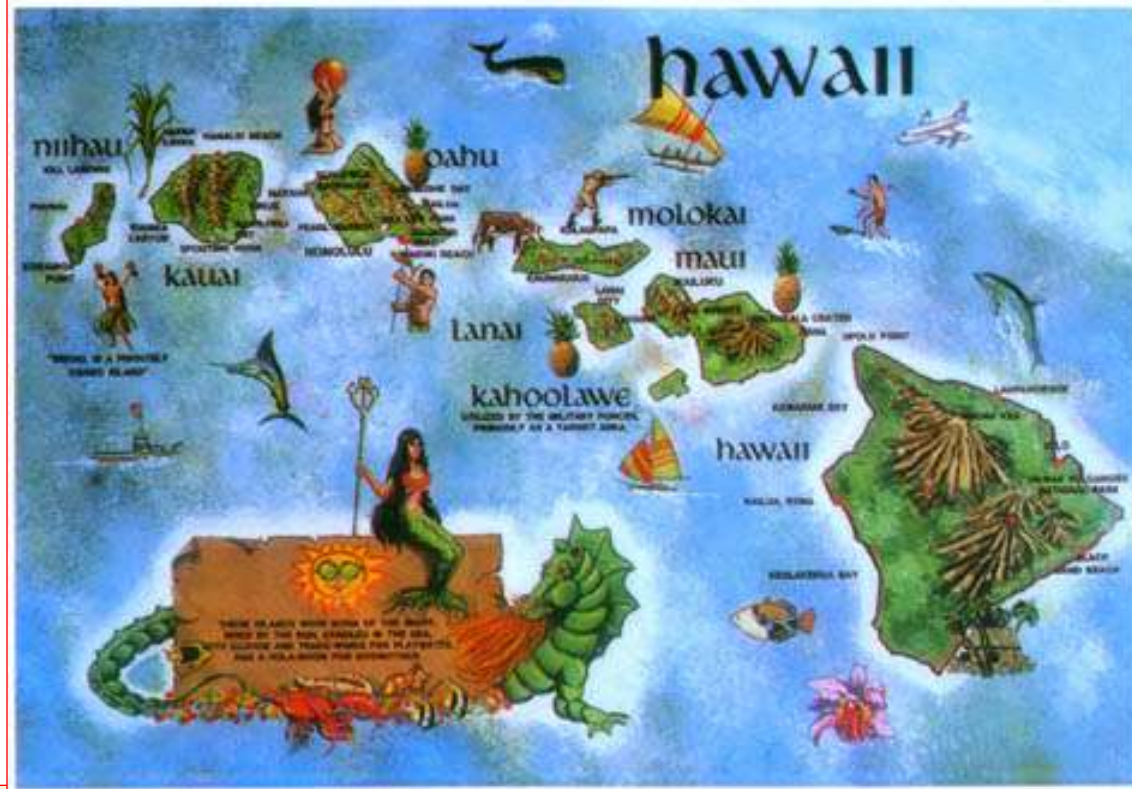
Europeans destroy other societies by breaking up families & weakening ancient traditions

The U.S. Takes Hawaii

The Hawaiian Islands were economically important to the U.S. because since the 1790's, U.S. merchants stopped there on their way to China & East India.

Missionaries founded Christian schools & churches on the islands.

Sugar merchants changed the Hawaiian economy.



In the mid-19th century, U.S. owned sugar plantations accounted for about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the island's wealth. Plantation owners imported 1000's of laborers from Japan, Portugal & China. By 1900, foreigners & immigrant laborers outnumbered native Hawaiians about 3 to 1.

An 1875 treaty allowed the sale of Hawaiian sugar in the U.S. without a duty. In 1887, white business leaders in Hawaii forced King Kalakaua to change Hawaii's constitution to grant voting rights only to wealthy landowners. This change gave control of Hawaii's government to U.S. businessmen.

Also in 1887, the U.S. strong-armed Hawaii into signing a treaty allowing the construction of an American naval base at Pearl Harbor



King Kalakaua

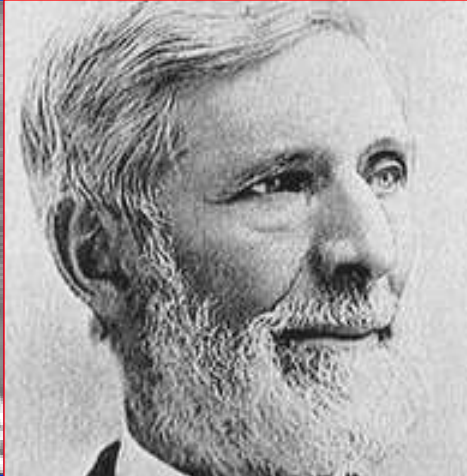


The McKinley Tariff of 1890 eliminated the duty-free status of Hawaiian sugar. As a result, Hawaiian sugar growers faced competition in the U.S. from places like Cuba. The American planters in Hawaii called for the U.S. to annex the islands so they would not have to pay the duty.

Annex- to incorporate (a country or other territory) within the domain of a state, or to obtain or take for oneself



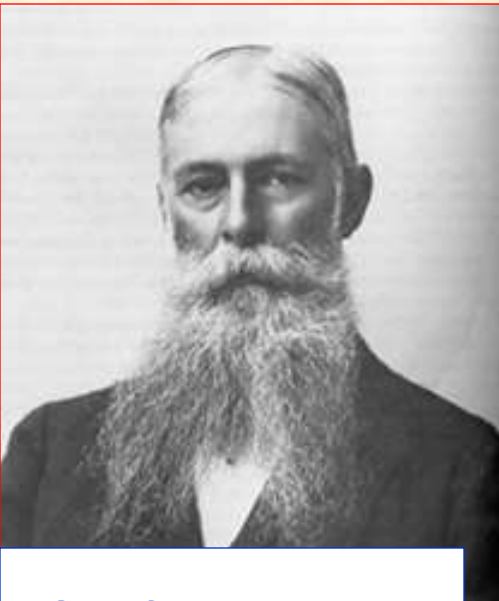
Queen Lili'uokalani



John L. Stevens

King Kalakaua dies in 1891 & his sister, Lili'uokalani becomes queen. She proposes a new constitution that would remove property qualifications for voting. This change would have restored political power over the islands to native Hawaiians.

To prevent this from happening, business groups, with the help of U.S. ambassador John L. Stevens organizes a revolution against the queen.



Sanford B. Dole

In 1883, Stevens orders the U.S.S. Boston to appear in the Honolulu harbor with U.S. marines who are told that they are protecting American lives & property. At the same time, volunteer troops take over the government building imprisoning the queen in her palace & establishing a provisional government with Sanford B. Dole as president.

After the native Hawaiians petitioned the U.S. government to reinstate Lili'uokalani as the Hawaiian queen, which was to no avail, on Aug. 12th 1898, Congress proclaimed Hawaii an American territory.

British Imperialism in India

In the 1600's, the British East India Company set up trading posts at Bombay, Madras & Calcutta. At first, India's ruling Mughal Dynasty kept European traders under control. By 1707, the Mughal empire was collapsing.



The East India Company quickly took advantage of the growing weakness of the Mughals. In 1757, Robert Clive led company troops in a decisive victory over Indian forces at the Battle of Plassey.

From that time on, the East Indian company was the leading power in India. The area controlled by the company grew over time.

The British Gvmt. Regulated the East Indian Company's efforts both in London & in India. Until the beginning of the 19th century, the company ruled India with little interference from the British government.

After the Industrial Revolution, India became a major supplier of raw materials. It's 300 million people were also a large potential market for British-made goods. Because of this, the British considered India the brightest "*Jewel in the crown*" - the most valuable of all of Britain's colonies.



The British set up restrictions that prevented the Indian economy from operating on its own. British policies called for India to:

- Produce raw materials for British manufacturing
- Buy British finished goods
- Competition with British finished goods was prohibited.

As a result, India's textile industry was almost put out of business & cheap cloth & ready made clothes from England drove out local producers.

India became economically valuable only after the British established a railroad network. Railroads transported raw products from the interior to the ports & manufactured goods back again.

The majority of the raw materials were agricultural products produced on plantations. One of the crops produced was opium, which was shipped to China where it was exchanged for, which they then sold in England



Positives & Negatives of British Colonialism

Positives

- Laying of the world's 3rd largest railroad network, which helped India develop a modern economy & it united various regions
- A modern road network, telephone, telegraph lines, dams, bridges, & irrigation canals enabled India to modernize
- Sanitation & public health improved
- Schools & colleges were founded & literacy
- British troops got rid of bandits & put an end to local warfare among competing local rulers

Negatives

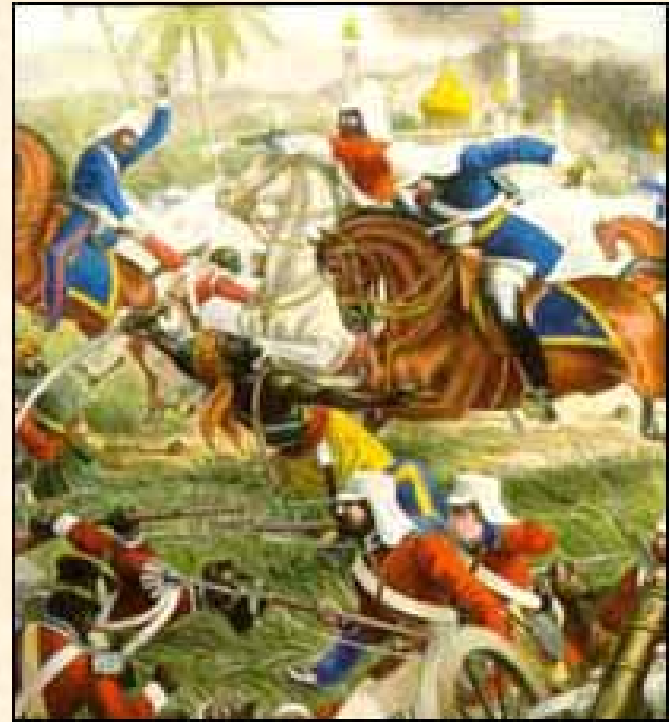
- British held much of the political & economic power
- The British restricted Indian-owned industries
- The emphasis on cash crops resulted in a loss of self-sufficiency for many villagers
- The conversion to cash crops reduced food production
- The increase presence of missionaries & the outspoken racist attitude of most British officials threatened Indian traditional life.

By 1850, the British controlled most of the Indian subcontinent. Many Indians believed that the British were trying to convert them to Christianity & they resented the constant racism that the British expressed toward them.

In 1857, gossip spread among the Sepoys, the Indian soldiers, that the cartridges of their new Enfield rifles were sealed with beef & pork fat. Loading involved biting the end of the cartridge, which was greased in pig fat & beef tallow. This presented a problem for native soldiers, since pig fat was a forbidden substance for Muslims, and beef fat was deemed sacred by Hindus because they considered the cow sacred. In addition, the British legislation interfered with traditional Hindu and Muslim religious practices, which produced another source of hostility. Indian practices such as saathi, (the ritual suicide of widows on their husbands' funeral pyres), became a source of outrage among the natives. In other words, the growing intrusion of western culture became the driving force for the rebellious soldiers, fearful that their culture was being destroyed.

85 of the 90 Sepoys refused to accept the cartridges. The soldiers who had disobeyed were jailed. The next day on May 10, 1857, they rebelled. They marched to Delhi, where they were joined by Indian soldiers stationed there. They captured the city of Delhi & from there, the rebellion spread to northern & central India.

The Sepoy Mutiny spread over much of northern India. Both British & Sepoys tried to slaughter each others armies.



The East Indian Company took more than a year to regain control of the country. The British government sent troops the help them.

The Indians could not unite against the British due to weak leadership & problems between the Hindus & Muslims. Hindus did not want the Muslim Mughal Empire restored & many Hindus preferred British rule to Muslim rule.

As a result of the mutiny, in 1858 the British government took direct command of India. India was divided into 11 provinces & some 250 districts. A cabinet minister in London directed policy and a British governor-general in India carried out the government's orders. After 1877, this official held the title of viceroy. The British ruled over India from 1757 until 1947.

The mutiny did two things:

It fueled the racist attitudes of the English towards the Indians all the more.

It increased distrust between the British & the Indians.

In the early 1800's, some Indians began demanding more modernization & a greater role in governing themselves.

RAM MOHUN ROY, a modern-thinking, well-educated Indian man, began a campaign to move India away from traditional practices & ideas.

He is called the father of Modern India. His writings inspired other Indian reformers to call for adoption of Western ways. Roy also founded a social reform movement that worked for change in India.



Portrait of Ram Mohun Roy by Felice Perrotti Briggs in the Bristol Museums and Art Gallery, Bristol, U.K. Reproduced courtesy Francis Greenacre, Curator of Fine Art.

Besides modernization & westernization, nationalist feelings started to surface in India. Indians resented a system that made them second-class citizens in their own country. Even Indians with a European education faced discrimination. They were barred from top posts in the Indian Civil Service. Those who managed to get middle-level jobs were paid less than Europeans. For example, a British engineer on the East Indian Railway made nearly 20 times more money than an Indian engineer.

These feelings of nationalism led to the founding of two nationalist groups:

The Indian National Congress in 1885 & the Muslim League in 1906.

At first, they concentrated on specific concerns for Indians. Gradually, their demands broadened. By the early 1900's, they were calling for self-government.

The nationalists were further inflamed in 1905 by the partition of Bengal. The province, which had a population of 85 million, was too large for administrative purposes, so the British divided it into a Hindu section & a Muslim section.

Acts of terrorism broke out. The province was on the edge of open rebellion. In 1911, yielding to the pressure, the British took back the order & divided the province in a different way. Conflict over the control of India continued to develop between the Indians & the British in the following years.

Tourist map of West Bengal



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