



African soldiers in German uniforms

## WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

## Resisting Imperialism

In 1890, Chief Mchemba (mah CHEM bah) of the Yao (YAH oh) people in East Africa wrote in Swahili to a German officer:

“If it be friendship that you desire, then I am ready for it . . . but to be your subject, that I cannot be. . . I do not fall at your feet, for you are God’s creature just as I am.”

—Chief Mchemba, Letter to Herman von Wissman

**Focus Question** How did imperialist European powers claim control over most of Africa by the end of the 1800s?

## The Partition of Africa

### Objectives

- Analyze the forces that shaped Africa.
- Explain why European contact with Africa increased during the 1800s.
- Understand how Leopold II started a scramble for colonies.
- Describe how Africans resisted imperialism.



In the late 1800s, Britain, France, Germany, and other European powers began a scramble for African territories. Within about 20 years, the Europeans had carved up the continent and dominated millions of Africans. Although the Yao and others resisted, they could not prevent European conquest.

### Africa in the Early 1800s

To understand the impact of European domination, we must look at Africa in the early 1800s, before the scramble for colonies began. Africa is a huge continent, nearly three times the size of Europe. Across its many regions, people spoke hundreds of languages and had developed varied governments. Some people lived in large centralized states, while others lived in village communities.

**North Africa** North Africa includes the enormous Sahara and the fertile land along the Mediterranean. Since long before 1800, the region was a part of the Muslim world. In the early 1800s, much of North Africa remained under the rule of the declining Ottoman empire.

**Islamic Crusades in West Africa** By the early 1800s, an Islamic revival spread across West Africa. It began among the Fulani people in northern Nigeria. The scholar and preacher **Usman dan Fodio** (oo SMAHN dahn foh DEE oh) denounced the corruption of the local Hausa rulers. He called for social and religious reforms based on the sharia, or Islamic law. Usman inspired Fulani herders and Hausa townspeople to rise up against their European rulers.

### Terms, People, and Places

Usman dan Fodio	Boer War
Shaka	Samori Touré
paternalistic	Yaa Asantewaa
David Livingstone	Nehanda
Henry Stanley	Menelik II
King Leopold II	elite

### Note Taking

**Reading Skill: Identify Causes and Effects** As you read the section, fill in the chart with information about the causes and effects of the partition of Africa by European nations.





Usman and his successors set up a powerful Islamic state in northern Nigeria. Under their rule, literacy increased, local wars quieted, and trade improved. Their success inspired other Muslim reform movements in West Africa. Between about 1780 and 1880, more than a dozen Islamic leaders rose to power, replacing old rulers or founding new states in the western Sudan.

In the forest regions, strong states like the Asante (uh SAHN teh) kingdom had arisen. The Asante traded with Europeans and Muslims and controlled several smaller states. However, these tributary states were ready to turn to Europeans or others who might help them defeat their Asante rulers.

**East Africa** Islam had long influenced the east coast of Africa, where port cities like Mombasa (mahm BAH suh) and Kilwa (KEEL wah) carried on profitable trade. The cargoes were often slaves. Captives were marched from the interior to the coast to be shipped as slaves to the Middle East. Ivory and copper from Central Africa were also exchanged for goods such as cloth and firearms from India.

**Southern Africa** In the early 1800s, the Zulus emerged as a major force in southern Africa under a ruthless and brilliant leader, **Shaka**. Between 1818 and 1828, Shaka waged relentless war and conquered many nearby peoples. He absorbed their young men and women into Zulu regiments. By encouraging rival groups to forget their differences, he cemented a growing pride in the Zulu kingdom.

His conquests, however, set off mass migrations and wars, creating chaos across much of the region. Groups driven from their homelands by the Zulus then migrated north, conquering still other peoples and creating their own powerful states. By the 1830s, the Zulus faced a new threat, the arrival of well-armed, mounted Boers, descendants of Dutch farmers who were migrating north from the Cape Colony. In 1814, the Cape Colony had passed from the Dutch to the British. Many Boers resented British laws that abolished slavery and otherwise interfered with their way of life. To escape British rule, they loaded their goods into covered wagons and started north. Several thousand Boer families joined this “Great Trek.”

As the migrating Boers came into contact with Zulus, fighting quickly broke out. At first, Zulu regiments held their own. But in the end, Zulu spears could not defeat Boer guns. The struggle for control of the land would rage until the end of the century.

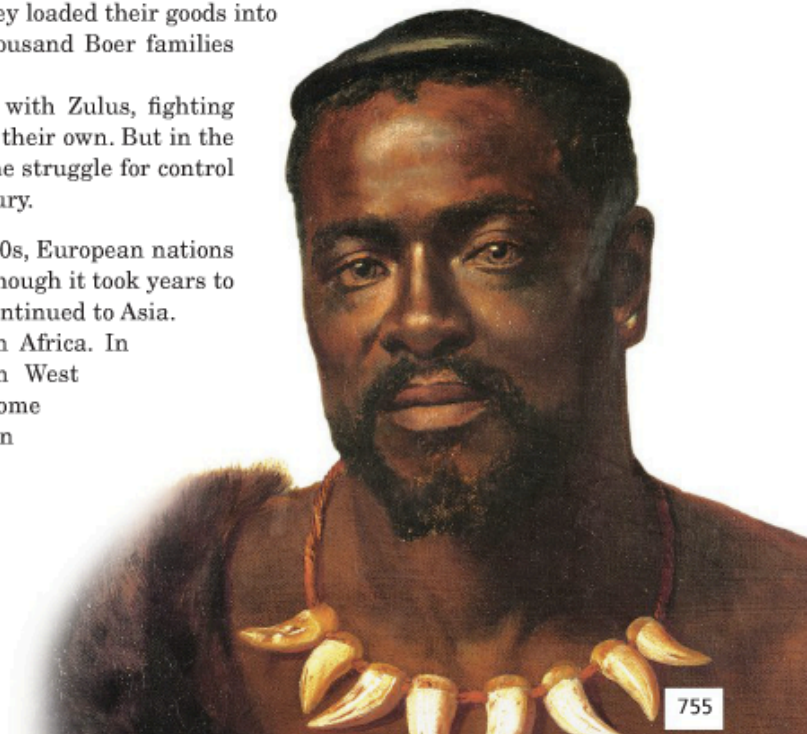
**Impact of the Slave Trade** In the early 1800s, European nations began to outlaw the transatlantic slave trade, though it took years to end. Meanwhile, the East African slave trade continued to Asia.

Some people helped freed slaves resettle in Africa. In 1787, the British organized Sierra Leone in West Africa as a colony for former slaves. Later, some free blacks from the United States settled in nearby Liberia. By 1847, Liberia had become an independent republic.

 **Checkpoint** What factors shaped each of the main regions of Africa during the early 1800s?

#### Zulu King Cetshwayo

A nephew of Shaka, Cetshwayo (kech wY oh) was the last of the great Zulu kings. He ruled a disciplined army of about 40,000 men until the British defeated him in 1879. *Why was Cetshwayo considered a threat to British colonial interests?*





## European Contact Increases

From the 1500s through the 1700s, Europeans traded along the African coast. Africans wanted trade with Europeans but did not want to “house them.” Resistance by Africans, difficult geography, and diseases all kept Europeans from moving into the interior regions of the continent. Medical advances and river steamships changed all that in the 1800s.



### Missionaries at Work

Missionaries conduct a baptism ceremony in the Lower Congo in 1907. Others performed communion with chalices and patens, or ceremonial plates, like those above. *Why did missionaries seek to convert people to Christianity?*

**Explorers Advance Into Africa’s Interior** In the early 1800s, European explorers began pushing into the interior of Africa. Explorers like Mungo Park and Richard Burton set out to map the course and sources of the great African rivers such as the Niger, the Nile, and the Congo. They were fascinated by African geography, but they had little understanding of the peoples they met. All, however, endured great hardships while exploring Africa.

**Missionaries Follow Explorers** Catholic and Protestant missionaries followed the explorers. All across Africa, they sought to win people to Christianity. The missionaries were sincere in their desire to help Africans. They built schools and medical clinics alongside churches. They also focused attention on the evils of the slave trade. Still, missionaries, like most Westerners, took a **paternalistic** view of Africans, meaning they saw them as children in need of guidance. To them, African cultures and religions

were “degraded.” They urged Africans to reject their own traditions in favor of Western civilization.

**Livingstone Blazes a Trail** The best-known explorer and missionary was **Dr. David Livingstone**. For 30 years, he crisscrossed Africa. He wrote about the many peoples he met with more sympathy and less bias than did most Europeans. He relentlessly opposed the slave trade, which remained a profitable business for some African rulers and foreign traders. The only way to end this cruel traffic, he believed, was to open up the interior of Africa to Christianity and trade.

Livingstone blazed a trail that others soon followed. In 1869, the journalist **Henry Stanley** trekked into Central Africa to find Livingstone, who had not been heard from for years. He finally tracked him down in 1871 in what is today Tanzania, greeting him with the now-legendary phrase “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?”



**Checkpoint** How did European contact with Africa increase in the late 1800s?

## A Scramble for Colonies

Shortly afterward, **King Leopold II** of Belgium hired Stanley to explore the Congo River basin and arrange trade treaties with African leaders. Publicly, Leopold spoke of a civilizing mission to carry the light “that for millions of men still plunged in barbarism will be the dawn of a better era.” Privately, he dreamed of conquest and profit. Leopold’s activities in the Congo set off a scramble by other nations. Before long, Britain, France, and Germany were pressing rival claims to the region.

**Berlin Conference** To avoid bloodshed, European powers met at an international conference in 1884. It took place not in Africa but in Berlin, Germany. No Africans were invited to the conference.

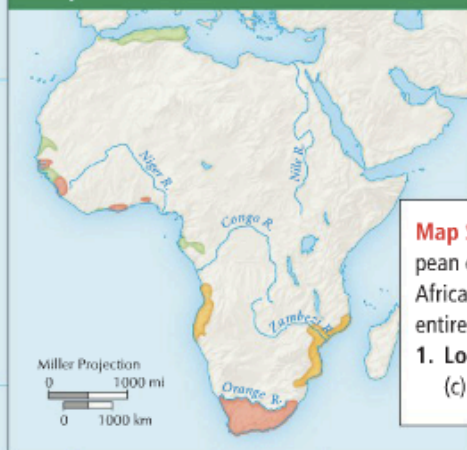
## Imperialism in Africa to 1914

Geography Interactive

For: Interactive map  
Web Code: nap-2421



## European Colonies in Africa About 1850



**Map Skills** During the late 1800s, European countries took part in a scramble for Africa. They claimed control of nearly the entire continent by 1914.

1. **Locate** (a) Algeria (b) Belgian Congo (c) Ethiopia

2. **Region** In which part of Africa were most of France's colonies located?

3. **Make Comparisons** How did imperialism in Africa in 1850 compare with that in 1914?

## BIOGRAPHY

### Cecil Rhodes

Cecil Rhodes (1853–1902) arrived in South Africa at age 17, determined to make his fortune. He got off to a slow start. His first venture, a cotton-farming project, failed. Then, Rhodes turned to diamond and gold mining. By the age of 40, he had become one of the richest men in the world.

However, money was not his real interest. "For its own sake I do not care for money," he once wrote. "I want the power." Rhodes strongly supported British imperialism in Africa. He helped Britain extend its African empire by 1,000,000 square miles and had an entire British colony named after himself—Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Rhodes also helped promote the policy of the separation of races in southern Africa. **How was Cecil Rhodes' desire for power illustrated by his actions?**



At the Berlin Conference, European powers recognized Leopold's private claims to the Congo Free State but called for free trade on the Congo and Niger rivers. They further agreed that a European power could not claim any part of Africa unless it had set up a government office there. This principle led Europeans to send officials who would exert their power over local rulers and peoples.

The rush to colonize Africa was on. In the 20 years after the Berlin Conference, the European powers partitioned almost the entire continent. As Europeans carved out their claims, they established new borders and frontiers. They redrew the map of Africa with little regard for traditional patterns of settlement or ethnic boundaries.

**Horrors in the Congo** Leopold and other wealthy Belgians exploited the riches of the Congo, including its copper, rubber, and ivory. Soon, there were horrifying reports of Belgian overseers brutalizing villagers. Forced to work for almost nothing, laborers were savagely beaten or mutilated. The overall population declined drastically.

Eventually, international outrage forced Leopold to turn over his personal colony to the Belgian government. It became the Belgian Congo in 1908. Under Belgian rule, the worst abuses were ended. Still, the Belgians regarded the Congo as a possession to be exploited. Africans were given little or no role in the government, and the wealth of their mines went out of the country to Europe.

**France Extends Its Influence** France took a giant share of Africa. In the 1830s, it had invaded and conquered Algeria in North Africa. The victory cost tens of thousands of French lives and killed many times more Algerians. In the late 1800s, France extended its influence along the Mediterranean into Tunisia. It also won colonies in West and Central Africa. At its height, the French empire in Africa was as large as the continental United States.

**Britain Takes Its Share** Britain's share of Africa was more scattered than that of France. However, it included more heavily populated regions with many rich resources. Britain took chunks of West and East Africa. It gained control of Egypt and pushed south into the Sudan.

In southern Africa, Britain clashed with the Boers, who were descendants of Dutch settlers. As you have read, Britain had acquired the Cape Colony from the Dutch in 1814. At that time, many Boers fled British rule, migrating north and setting up their own republics. In the late 1800s, however, the discovery of gold and diamonds in the Boer lands led to conflict with Britain. The **Boer War**, which lasted from 1899 to 1902, involved bitter guerrilla fighting. The British won in the end, but at great cost.

In 1910, the British united the Cape Colony and the former Boer republics into the Union of South Africa. The new constitution set up a government run by whites and laid the foundation for a system of complete racial segregation that would remain in force until 1993.

**Others Join the Scramble** Other European powers joined the scramble for colonies, in part to bolster their national image, while also furthering their economic growth and influence. The Portuguese carved out large colonies in Angola and Mozambique. Italy reached across the Mediterranean to occupy Libya and then pushed into the "horn" of Africa, at the southern end of the Red Sea. The newly united German empire took



lands in eastern and southwestern Africa, including Cameroons and Togo. A German politician, trying to ease the worries of European rivals, explained, “We do not want to put anyone in the shade, but we also demand our place in the sun.”

**✓ Checkpoint** How did King Leopold II set off a scramble for colonies in Africa?

## Africans Resist Imperialism

Europeans met armed resistance across the continent. The Algerians battled the French for years. **Samori Touré** (sah MAWR ee too RAY) fought French forces in West Africa, where he was building his own empire. The British battled the Zulus in southern Africa and the Asante in West Africa. When their king was exiled, the Asante put themselves under the command of their queen, **Yaa Asantewaa** (YA uh ah sahn TAY wuh). She led the fight against the British in the last Asante war. Another woman who became a military leader was **Nehanda** (neh HAHN duh), of the Shona in Zimbabwe. Although a clever tactician, Nehanda was captured and executed. However, the memory of her achievements inspired later generations to fight for freedom.

In East Africa, the Germans fought wars against the Yao and Herero (huh REHR oh). Fighting was especially fierce in the Maji-Maji Rebellion of 1905. The Germans triumphed only after burning acres and acres of farmland, leaving thousands of local people to die of starvation.

**Ethiopia Survives** One ancient Christian kingdom in East Africa, Ethiopia, managed to resist European colonization and maintain its independence. Like feudal Europe, Ethiopia had been divided up among a number of rival princes who ruled their own domains. In the late 1800s, however, a reforming ruler, **Menelik II**, began to modernize his country. He hired European experts to plan modern roads and bridges and set up a Western school system. He imported the latest weapons and European officers to help train his army. Thus, when Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1896, Menelik was prepared. At the battle of Adowa (AH duh wuh), the Ethiopians smashed the Italian invaders. Ethiopia was the only African nation, aside from Liberia, to preserve its independence.

### Vocabulary Builder

**domain**—(doh MAYN) *n.* territory over which rule or control is exercised

## BIOGRAPHY

### Menelik II

Before becoming emperor of Ethiopia, Menelik II (1844–1913) ruled the Shoa region in central Ethiopia. He ensured that he would succeed John IV as emperor by marrying his daughter to John’s son. After John died in 1889, Menelik took the throne.

Menelik used profits from ivory sales to buy modern weapons. He then hired European advisors to teach his soldiers how to use the new guns. Menelik’s army conquered neighboring lands and won a stunning victory over the Italians at Adowa. European nations rushed to establish diplomatic ties with Ethiopia. Around the world, people of African descent hailed Menelik’s victory over European imperialism. **How did Menelik preserve Ethiopian independence?**





### An Asante King

A king of the Asante people in Ghana (center) sits surrounded by his people. *What do the clothes of the man to the left of the king suggest about his social rank?*



**A New African Elite Emerges** During the Age of Imperialism, a Western-educated African **elite**, or upper class, emerged. Some middle-class Africans admired Western ways and rejected their own culture. Others valued their African traditions and condemned Western societies that upheld liberty and equality for whites only. By the early 1900s, African leaders were forging nationalist movements to pursue self-determination and independence.

**Checkpoint** How did Ethiopians resist imperialism?

## Section 2 Assessment

### Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice  
Web Code: naa-2421

#### Terms, People, and Places

- For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

#### Note Taking

- Reading Skill: Identify Causes and Effects** Use your completed chart to answer the Focus Question: How did imperialist European powers claim control over most of Africa by the end of the 1800s?

#### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- Describe** Name one development in each region of Africa in the early 1800s.
- Analyze Information** What impact did explorers and missionaries have on Africa?
- Draw Inferences** (a) Why do you think the Europeans did not invite Africans to the Berlin Conference? (b) What might be the effect of this exclusion upon later African leaders?
- Summarize** How did Africans resist European imperialism?

#### Writing About History

**Quick Write: Generate Arguments** One way to approach a persuasive essay is to create a list of arguments that you can include to persuade your audience. For practice, create a list of three arguments that could be used in a persuasive essay either in favor of or opposed to the European colonization of Africa.

## On Trial for My Country by Stanlake Samkange

European imperialists gained control over much of Africa by signing treaties with local rulers. In most cases, the chiefs did not understand what rights they were signing away. Cecil Rhodes used this tactic with King Lobengula, who thought that he was allowing the British only to dig on his land. Rhodes, however, took control of the kingdom, eventually naming it Rhodesia. The novel *On Trial for My Country* is a fictional account of a conversation between King Lobengula and his father.

“Why did you not stand up to Rhodes and prevent him from taking your country by strength? Why did you not fight?”

“I thought that if I appealed to the white men’s sense of justice and fair play, reminding them how good I had been to them since I had never killed or ill-treated a white man, they might hear my word and return to their homes. . . .”

“I . . . told them that I had not given them the road to Mashonaland.”

“Yes, and they replied and told you that they had been given the road by their Queen and would only return on the orders of their Queen. What did you do then?”

“I mobilized<sup>1</sup> the army and told them to wait for my word.”

“Did you give that word?”

“No.”

“Were the soldiers keen to fight?”

“Yes, they were dying to fight.”

“Why did you not let them fight?”

“I wanted to avoid bloodshed and war. . . .”

“And you allowed them to flout<sup>2</sup> your word as king of the Amandebele? You let them have their way. . . . Is that right? . . . Why did you not . . . seek their protection and declare your country a British protectorate?”

“ . . . I knew that if I fought the white men I would be beaten. If I sought the white man’s friendship and protection, there would be opposition to me or civil war. So I decided to pretend to the white men that if they came into the country I would fight, and hoped that they would be afraid and not come. . . . [T]hey called my bluff and came . . .”

“Was there no other way out of your dilemma?”

“I did consider marrying the Queen, but even though I hinted at this several times no one followed it up.”

“I see!”

1. **mobilize** (MOH buh lyz) *v.* to assemble for war

2. **flout** (flout) *v.* to mock



▲ King Lobengula of the Matabele nation in present-day Zimbabwe

### Thinking Critically

1. **Synthesize Information** Why did King Lobengula want to avoid fighting the British?
2. **Analyze Literature** How does Samkange show that Lobengula’s father disagreed with his son’s decision?