Dissatisfaction with European Rule

When these Africans returned to Africa they found that despite their university education, they could only get the lowest paying jobs as clerks in European companies or minor officials in the government. The best jobs with the highest pay as well as all the highest positions in the government were reserved for the Europeans. The Europeans looked down on the Africans as primitive and regarded Western civilization as superior. This they believed was due to their own racial superiority. In those parts of Africa where many Europeans had settled there was strict segregation in housing, education, and social life. Africans had the lowest standard of living and they had very little to say about how their government should be run, because all the final decisions were made by the Europeans. Under these circumstances it is little wonder that African nationalists began to demand a better life for their people and finally complete independence.
Africans directly. Also, they wanted to avoid the costs of setting up new governments, so in many cases they allowed the tribal chiefs to keep some of their power. The British, especially, did this. However, the Europeans were the real masters and told the Africans what they could do and what they could not do. This is known as “indirect rule.” The French, on the other hand, removed local rulers and governed through the Africans they appointed or through French officials.

6. Africa’s traditional political system was completely changed. The chiefs lost the power and respect that they formerly had. In the past it was believed that the chiefs had been given their power by the tribal god. Thus the African’s religious beliefs required support for the tribal chief. However, under European rule many Africans converted to Christianity and they no longer believed that their chiefs were appointed by God. Many Africans who went to work in the cities and gained some wealth did not accept the authority of the chiefs when they returned to the villages. In some cases, wealthy people were actually more important than the chief.

7. The Europeans provided some Western education for the Africans. This was because the Europeans needed people with at least some training to fill the minor government jobs and also to work as semiskilled workers and clerks for the trading companies. Britain also believed that the colonies would one day become independent and so some attempt was made to train Africans for leadership. This group of Western-educated Africans rejected the tribal chiefs’ powers, but at the same time they demanded a greater voice in the rule of their countries. These were the first “nationalists,” the people who led the struggle for independence from the Europeans.

8. In order to reach Africa’s resources more easily, the Europeans improved both transportation and communication. They also built hospitals and improved sanitation among the Africans. However, these improvements were not carried out because they were good for Africans, but because they were good for Europeans and made the colonies easier to control and more profitable.

Nationalism and Independence

Nationalism may be defined as the strong devotion to one’s nation that puts the nation above all other things. World War II (1939–1945) was a turning point in the development of African nationalism. Before the war, only a small number of educated Africans were nationalists. Their main demand was that Africans have a greater voice in the running of their governments, which were controlled by the Europeans. By the end of the war, nationalism had spread to the masses. Now they demanded complete independence from the Europeans.

The first African nationalists were those people who had received a Western education. They left their tribes and went to the cities to study in the schools set up by the Europeans. Many of them later went to Europe and America to complete their university education. Kwame Nkrumah, who became the President of Ghana, spent many years working and studying in New York. Jomo Kenyatta, who led Kenya to independence and was Kenya’s president until his death, studied in London. In Europe and America, they saw that people had liberty and rights that had been unknown to them—freedom of speech, press, and assembly; the right to vote and hold office; and trial by jury. The Africans felt that they, too, were entitled to the same rights as the English, French, and Americans.
Reasons for Imperialism

The European nations competed with each other to gain colonies in Africa for several reasons. They all wanted to gain power and prestige. The more territory that they were able to control in Africa the more powerful and important they became. Africa was tremendously rich in natural resources, which could be brought to Europe and turned into manufactured goods. Europeans also needed markets for the manufactured goods. These goods could be sold in Africa for large profits. Often a European nation would take over territory in Africa simply to prevent another European country from taking it.

How Imperialism Spread

European rule came to Africa in many different ways. Sometimes a European trading company made agreements with African chiefs permitting the company to trade and keep order in the area. The traders then put pressure on their government in Europe to take over that area in order to protect them. In a few cases tribal chiefs voluntarily asked for the protection of one European nation in order to avoid being taken over by another European nation. Sometimes the Africans even asked for European protection against other African tribes.

Treaties were signed by the African chiefs in which they gave the European company or government the right to govern and to take over the land and resources in their area. Thousands of treaties were signed by African rulers giving away most of their rights to the Europeans, but the Africans never really understood these treaties and did not realize what they were giving away.

How Imperialism Changed Africa

European rule brought about great changes in Africa.
1. When the Europeans divided up Africa, they made deals with each other over who was to get what. Boundary lines were drawn that had nothing to do with the needs of the African people. Many tribes were divided and found themselves under the rule of two or three different foreign nations. Other tribes who had nothing in common with each other were grouped together in the same territory. Some of the problems that the African nations have today are the result of this situation.
2. The Europeans did not want to spend large sums of money governing their African colonies. Therefore, the Africans were forced to pay taxes for the cost of ruling the colony.
3. The Europeans were interested in exploiting Africa’s natural resources. Using various methods, the Europeans forced the Africans to work for them in the mines and on the plantations and farms that the Europeans now owned. In the Belgian Congo the system was the cruelest of all. Forced labor was introduced and those Africans who did not produce the required amount of rubber were brutally beaten. Rubber from the Congo came to be called “red rubber,” because of the thousands of Africans who died tapping it and bringing it to the coast.
4. In such places as Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Kenya, where large numbers of Europeans settled, the best farming land was reserved for the Europeans.
5. European conquest did not bring about the immediate destruction of traditional African governments. The Europeans did not have enough manpower to rule the
large as Belgium. Portugal annexed the interior areas of Angola and Mozambique. Italy took over Eritrea, a large part of Somaliland and Libya. Southwest Africa, Tanganyika, Togoland, and Cameroon were ruled by Germany until Germany's defeat in World War I. By 1914, there were two independent countries left in Africa—Liberia and Ethiopia. And even Ethiopia was taken over by Italy in 1935. (Italy controlled Ethiopia until 1942 when the British drove the Italians out.)
9. **Henry M. Stanley** remained in Africa after Livingstone’s death and continued exploring on his own. Stanley was the first European to explore the Zaire (Congo) River. In 1888, he arrived at a snow-capped mountain peak in central Africa and named it Ruwenzori. (The Africans call this mountain Runisoro or Kokora). Stanley’s explorations and actions gave control of the Congo region and the area around Ruwenzori to Belgium.

10. **Cecil Rhodes** explored Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and eventually gained control of the area for Great Britain. Among his many ideas was that the British should build a railroad from Cairo to Capetown. His activities were the basis of British claims to control southern Africa.

**Accomplishments of the Explorers**

In this way, the four great African rivers were explored. The explorers wrote books and drew maps, making it easier for others to follow. But new land and rivers were not all that the explorers of Africa found. Mungo Park found a highly developed civilization in the Sudan. Speke found African kingdoms on the banks of Lake Victoria. The explorers are important not only for their discoveries but also for the picture of the African peoples and their cultures that they provided to Europe. By reporting these things to the people in Europe the explorers aroused interest in Africa and paved the way for the coming of more Europeans to the continent.

**The Missionaries**

The missionaries followed the explorers into the interior of Africa. The missionaries came to Africa to spread the Christian religion and to wipe out the slave raids which were still being carried on. The missionaries built schools, hospitals, and churches. They also worked out systems of writing for many of the African languages. While the missionaries helped the African people in many ways, they also hurt them in other ways. Many of the reports sent back to Europe by the missionaries were filled with bias and errors. To justify their attempt to spread the Christian religion, the missionaries looked down upon many African customs as “savage” and “primitive.” Many of the myths about Africa originated with the missionaries.

**European Imperialism in Africa**

By 1875, European possessions in Africa consisted of some forts and trading posts along the coast and a few tiny colonies. Between 1880 and 1910, however, Africa was divided up among the Europeans. For the next 50 years, decisions affecting Africa and its people were made not in Africa, but in Europe.

France acquired a huge empire in North and West Africa. Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Mali, and other areas in West Africa came under French rule. Britain’s colonies were scattered throughout the continent. Although the French controlled the most territory, Britain ruled the greatest number of people. Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Nigeria, South Africa, Rhodesia, Uganda, Kenya, Egypt, the Sudan, and others were taken over by Britain. Belgium acquired the Congo, an area 35 times as
River. In his search for the source of the river, Livingstone traveled across Africa to the west coast and then turned east again. In 1855, Livingstone saw the world’s greatest waterfall, which he named Victoria Falls, in honor of Britain’s queen. By 1868, Livingstone had stopped corresponding with the outside world. In 1869, a New York newspaper sent one of its reporters, Henry Stanley, to find the missing Livingstone. Stanley found Livingstone two years later near Lake Tanganyika. Together they explored the northern shore of Lake Tanganyika and other parts of East Africa.

7. Richard Burton and John Speke were two Englishmen who were determined to find the source of the Nile River. They were the first Europeans to visit Somaliland. In 1858, they reached Lake Tanganyika, never before visited by Europeans. Some time later Speke discovered Lake Victoria, which he claimed was the source of the Nile. Their explorations were the basis of British claims to control most of East Africa.

8. Sir Samuel Baker and Florence Von Sass, his wife, discovered a great body of water in 1864, which they named Lake Albert. This is the source of the White Nile. The river, which comes out of Lake Victoria, is known as the Victoria Nile. The Victoria Nile flows into Lake Albert, and when it flows out of the lake, it is known as the White Nile.
the defeat of the South in the American Civil War in 1865 and the abolition of slavery in Cuba and Brazil in 1880s, did the slave trade finally come to an end in the West. However, even today the United Nations estimates that some 30,000 blacks are still kidnapped each year to be sold as slaves in the Middle East, mainly in the villages of Saudi Arabia.

**Africa Is Opened to the Western World: Explorers and Missionaries**

**European Explorers**

Until the 19th century, the only contact Europeans had with Africa was limited to the coastal areas. This situation changed during the 19th century. The antislavery movement had made Europeans curious about the land and people of Africa. European explorers came to Africa and explored the interior of the continent. Missionaries followed and soon businesspeople came. By 1880, most of the interior of Africa was known to the Europeans.

1. **James Bruce** was the first major European explorer of Africa. In 1770, he sailed up the Nile River and discovered Lake Tana in Ethiopia, the source of the Blue Nile.
2. **Mungo Park** was the first European to explore the Niger River in 1796. His explorations aroused British interest in Africa.
3. **Dixon Denham and Richard and John Landers** navigated the entire length of the Niger River (1822–1834). These explorations made West Africa known to Europeans and made it easier to travel into the central part of West Africa.
4. **René Caillié**, a Frenchman, was the first European explorer to enter Timbuctu and return alive. This took place in 1828. His descriptions of his explorations and of Timbuctu stimulated great interest in the exploration of Africa. Caillié was also the first European to cross the Sahara from south to north (1827–1828). These explorations gave France its claim to ownership of West Africa.
5. **Johann Rebmann**, a German missionary, was the first European to see Mt. Kilimanjaro (1848), a great snow-covered mountain located on the equator. Rebmann kept a careful record of his journey through East Africa. His explorations gave Germany its claim to ownership of the area.
6. **David Livingstone** did more than anyone else to open up Africa to the Europeans. Livingstone first came to Africa as a doctor and missionary in 1840. Until his death in 1873, Livingstone attempted to do the following:
   (a) explore and map the area
   (b) expose the evils of the slave trade
   (c) cure the sick
   (d) translate the Bible into several African languages

   In 1849, Livingstone reached Lake Ngami in what is now Botswana in southern Africa. He surveyed the area and put his observations into writing. In Europe, this account aroused great interest. Following this, Livingstone explored the Zambezi
way to the coast during the three centuries of the slave trade. Insecurity and fear were created. The slave trade broke down respect for tribal laws and customs.

3. The trans-Sahara trade was destroyed. The sub-Saharan peoples stopped raising crops and producing goods that they had formerly traded. Contact with the people of North Africa ended. As a result, the sub-Saharan kingdoms, whose wealth and power had been based on this trade, declined.

4. The coastal states became rich and strong from the profits of the slave trade. European products such as iron, guns, gunpowder, rum and brandy, cloth, brass, and other goods came to be regarded by the coastal people as necessities. These products could only be purchased in exchange for slaves. So the people of the coastal states undertook to enslave their neighbors. Some states, such as Ashanti and Dahomey, became powerful and wealthy. When the slave trade was finally ended, these kingdoms lost their most important source of wealth, and economic problems grew.

The slave trade was a major factor in holding back the progress of Africa for centuries. Between the 16th and the 19th centuries, Europe’s main interest in Africa was obtaining slaves. There was very little communication between Europeans and Africans, and no exchange of culture and knowledge. No missionaries or teachers visited Africa during this time. The Europeans rarely went inland. Thus, during 300 years of contact with the Europeans, the Africans had no opportunity to learn European techniques so that they could modernize their way of life.

The Slave Trade Comes to an End

A strong antislave movement sprang up in Great Britain and other countries by the end of the 18th century. In 1772, the British abolished slavery in England, and in 1807 it became illegal for British subjects to take part in the slave trade. British pressure forced Spain and Portugal to officially end their participation in the slave trade in the early 1800s. The United States abolished the slave trade in 1808. For more than 50 years the British navy hunted down slave ships in the Atlantic Ocean. But as long as there was a demand for slaves on American plantations, slave boats tried to get past the British patrols. Only after
The Slave Trade

Slavery Before the Arrival of the Europeans

From the beginning of history, slavery in one form or another existed in many parts of the world. Slavery had existed in Africa hundreds of years before the arrival of the Europeans. Enemies captured in battle, criminals, and debtors were often forced into slavery. But this type of slavery existed only on a small scale and was not necessarily hereditary. It was also different from the type of slavery that developed later because Africans did not regard slavery as the total ownership of another human being. The slave trade also existed long before the arrival of the Europeans. Africans were captured by Arabs and sold in the markets of the East—in India, Indonesia, Egypt, Turkey, and Persia.

In 1441, a Portuguese ship returned to Lisbon, bringing back, among other cargo, 12 men, women, and children from Africa. These were the first African slaves to be sold in Europe. But there was not much need for slaves in Europe and so the slave trade was not very important to the Europeans in the beginning.

The Need for Slaves in the New World

It was not until the European planters in the West Indies discovered that they could make fortunes by growing sugar with the labor of African slaves that the trade in human beings became important. By the mid 1500s, the slave trade had grown tremendously. As the European demand for sugar and tobacco grew, the need for slaves in the New World grew as well. The profits of the slave trade for the Europeans were enormous. These profits and the labor of millions of African slaves in part made possible the industrialization of Europe and the development of the Americas.

How the Slave Trade Operated

Slave trading posts were set up on the west coast of Africa by the Europeans. The Europeans did not go into the interior to get the slaves. The slaves were captured by Arab slave traders and by stronger African tribes who raided the villages of other tribes. Africans living in the coastal villages were given guns by the Portuguese and were encouraged to attack the tribes living in the interior. The slaves were then brought to the coast.

After buying the slaves, the Europeans kept them in stockades—sometimes for weeks—until the slave ships arrived. On the ship the slaves were packed in so tightly that there was barely room to lie down. The more slaves jammed into a ship the larger was the profit. Many died of beatings, disease, and lack of food and water.

Results of the Slave Trade

The slave trade had tremendous effects on Africa.

1. The population of the area was greatly reduced. About 15 million of the healthiest and most intelligent young men and women of Africa were removed from the continent. Thus, Africa was deprived of future leaders at a time when they were most needed.

2. There was an increase in tribal warfare. Crops were burned and entire villages destroyed during the slave raids. Millions of Africans died in those wars and on the
Portugal Gains Control of the East African Trade

Following Vasco da Gama’s voyage, Portugal controlled the trade between East Africa and Asia. Portuguese ships carried slaves and ivory from Africa to India where they were exchanged for spices, cloth, and glassware. The ships then sailed back to East Africa for repairs and for gold and then returned to Portugal. When some of the African cities along the coast, such as Kilwa and Mombasa, tried to resist Portuguese control, they were defeated and burned. Portugal’s control of this trade greatly affected the kingdoms of East Africa. The wealth that trade had formerly brought to Africa’s east coast now went to Portugal. As a result, the civilizations along the east coast of Africa gradually declined.

By the middle of the 16th century, other European nations became interested in the profitable African trade and began to challenge Portugal. The English, French, Dutch, and others came to the West African coast for gold and ivory. In the 17th century, Portugal’s control over the East African trade declined as other Europeans and Arabs began to take over this trade. At the same time, the trade in gold and ivory was becoming less important to the Europeans and being replaced by another type of “gold.”