

The Scramble for Africa

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Background

During the mid 1800's, many European countries realized the amount of "unclaimed" resources in Africa (Heath). Many of these countries were failing to supply resources for people and their factories, and found this to be a perfect new market for old and new materials (Heath). Because it was not regulated however, tensions between the three main powers: France, Great Britain, and Germany began to appear (Heath).

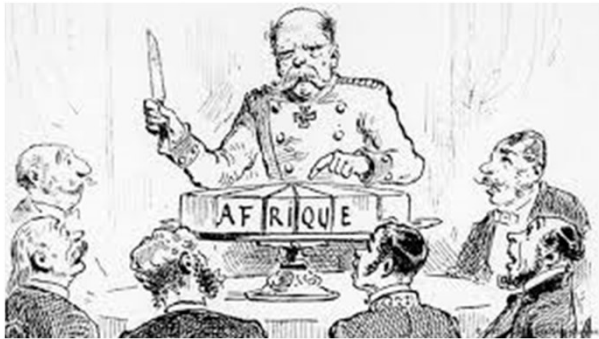


The African Diaspora

Before the profit of resources became the most popular form of trade in Africa, it was slavery. Africans were ripped from their homes against their will, and dispersing them across the globe to be sold as slaves. This was the major cause of the African Diaspora (Adamek). Liberia, which was created with the purpose of sending Africans back from America, was also a result of this (Ho).



The Berlin Conference



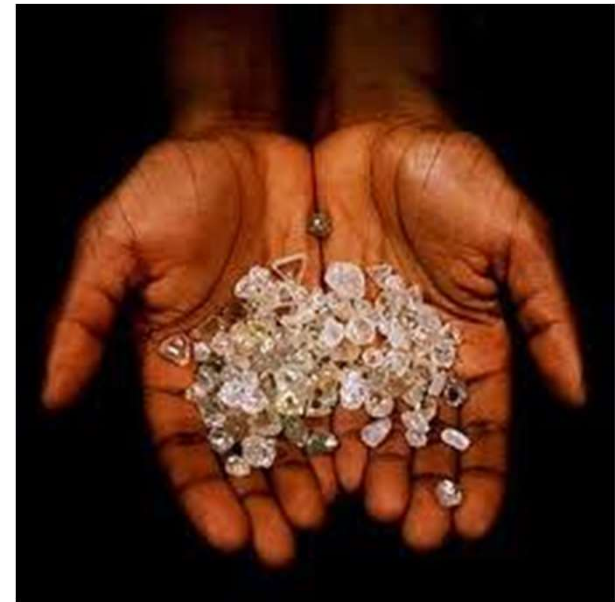
By 1884, the tensions had become bad enough to the point that Otto von Bismarck; the German Chancellor decided to step in and suggest a conference (Rosenberg). This conference was held through 1885, between 13 European countries and the United States (“The Scramble”). The intended goal was to split up Africa into chunks, so the different countries could claim their territories and extract their resources.

Who Was Involved? What were the Materials?

The Countries Involved: France, Germany, Great Britain, Belgium, Italy, Denmark, Portugal, Russia, Netherlands, Sweden-Norway, Spain, Austria-Hungary, The United States, and Turkey (Rosenberg).

Africa was not invited.

The Materials Desired: Copper, diamonds, oil, tea, cotton, timber, rubber, groundnut, ivory and many more (Ho).



What Happened?

Africa was split up, with Germany taking the smallest piece and Belgium taking the largest (Rosenberg).

King Leopold II who ruled Belgium is known for being the most heinous leader, as he single handedly destroyed the Congo and killed millions of Africans (VC3 Productions).

Both the Nile and Niger rivers became neutral, unclaimed zones, and a basis was laid for free trade (Rosenberg).

“Agents” were sent in to represent the European countries, and tricked the nations leaders into signing treaties that took away their rights and liberties (Iweriebor).

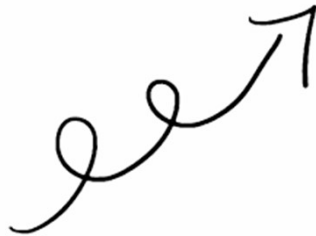
How Africa Fought Back

It did not take long for the Africans to realize they had been deceived, and consequently began forming a plan to fight back through the use of two different tactics:

“Guerrilla Warfare”

and

“Direct Military Engagement”



Although both forms of resistance worked quite well, it did not stop the European nations from claiming their territories. It did however slow them down, and prevent them from capturing every inch of land. The one major victory the Africans gained was that of Ethiopia, which managed to stay independent up until 1936 (Liberia was the only other free nation)-- (Iweriebor).

Direct v.s. Indirect Rule

There were two main forms of rule the colonizers used; these being direct and indirect.

Indirect: Mainly used by Britain, this form of governing and control focused on having people already living in the colonies keep things under control, and report back to those in charge in the homeland (Iweriebor).

Direct: Used by everyone else, this form of governing and control had the systems of government replaced with rulers from the homeland (University).



How It Affected Africa

A major factor in the aftermath of the Scramble for Africa is the way the borders were built, when the continent was split into different chunks (Michalopoulos).



“Civil conflict” has appeared to be a major issue between border areas that were established by the Berlin conference at a rate of 25% higher than in areas that were left alone (Michalopoulos).

How it Affected Africa (Continued)

Because the European countries dried up as much of Africa's resources as they could while in power, Africa was left with desolate land and destroyed nations. This has prevented them from advancing at the same rate as, and preventing them from becoming a world power in the last century.

Millions of Africans were also killed by the diseases brought by the Europeans and their wars, such as the Spanish Flu ("Africa").



Aftermath (How it ended)

The tension did not subside between the colonizers forever however, and began to appear again in the beginning of the 20th century.

This was the foreground that was laid before the eventual spark that was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary, that immediately led to the beginning of what was originally named the “Great War” but would later be reclassified as “World War I”. When the war ended, Germany was forced to sign over their territories to England and France during the Treaty of Versailles (“Austria's”).

How They Gained Independence

After WWII, the U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister of Britain Winston Churchill wrote the *Atlantic Charter* in 1941, stating that all people and nations have a right to choose their way of self governance (“Module Seven”).

This gave Africans a loophole to argue their freedom was owed to them. By the 1950’s many new African-run political parties gained huge support, all fighting for the end of colonialism (“Module Seven”).

The colonizers were given no choice but to concede, as the voice of Africans standing together was too loud for them to ignore.

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