

AFRICA

Birthplace of Humankind

This is the beginning of 33 articles which appeared in the Sunday Post's supplement the Learning Post in 1980:

IN NO PART of the world has change been as rapid and as dramatic as in Africa and today LEARNING POST offers readers an exciting opportunity of exploring Africa's history. (*Sunday, March 9, 1980*).

AFRICA, the birthplace of humankind, has been moving more and more towards the centre of world history. Political independence and the growth of cities and industry have brought about massive changes in the lives of Africa's people.

Because of apartheid and racism, South Africa has been cast out of the family of African states. It is the only independent African country that is not a member of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

One result of this is that South Africans do not hear very much about what is going on in the rest of Africa. We are like people who live in the backyard and who only hear rumours about what is happening in the big house of Africa.

Learning Post's Africa series hopes to bring readers into the "big house of Africa." It will start at the beginning and:

- Look at all the most important events in the history of Africa;
- Show how similar are the problems, and the solutions, in different parts of Africa;
- Show many differences within Africa, and try to explain why they exist;
- Stress the economic and political problems facing African people today;
- Discuss the different systems of ideas (such as nationalism and socialism) in which the people of Africa believe.

The series is reprinted by the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT).
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Foreword by: John Samuel, Enver Motala and Salim Vally.



Reading the World and the World
Changing the Text and the Context



Centre for
Education Rights
and Transformation



FOREWORD

The article on the opposite page commenced the African History series which first appeared in the Learning Post in 1980. The Learning Post was launched by SACHED (South African Committee for Higher Education) Trust as a weekly education supplement in the Sunday Post. Written largely by Neville Alexander, it was a popular and trailblazing initiative then and is just as important and relevant in the struggle to decolonise knowledge and the curriculum today.

The 1980s were turbulent times in apartheid South Africa. Building on the momentum and the lessons of the historic worker strikes of 1973, the student uprising of 1976, and the liberation struggles in neighbouring countries, the early 80s saw the emergence of vibrant community based organisations, student formations and the union movement. It was also a time when countless sacrifices were made in the face of state repression. Despite the killings, torture and imprisonment, resistance to apartheid capitalism was not extinguished, in fact, it increased.

It was also a time when a great deal of discussion, strategising, organising and mobilising took place. Educational issues were regarded as critical for the development of social and political consciousness to support the process of mass mobilisation. The role, purposes and meaning of education were rethought and the racist ideas and practices of apartheid education rejected.

Many young activists in the Black Consciousness and other movements prominent at the time, were concerned about representations of black history and culture, its contribution to the development of knowledge and its place in the pantheon of human development and in relation to the development of the continent. This was particularly important against the background of the racist ideas that were pervasive in the educational curriculum, in school and tertiary education texts, in the ideas of the ideologues and educators trained by apartheid and in the media controlled by capitalist media houses supportive of the apartheid state.

Regrettably even many oppressed people in South Africa were unaware of the rich and varied history of the African continent, paid little attention to it, and were themselves (like many thousands of teachers) complicit, often unwittingly, in purveying falsities and canards about the continent of Africa and its history. They too looked to Europe for models of political systems, science and development. It was against this background that SACHED launched its innovative and

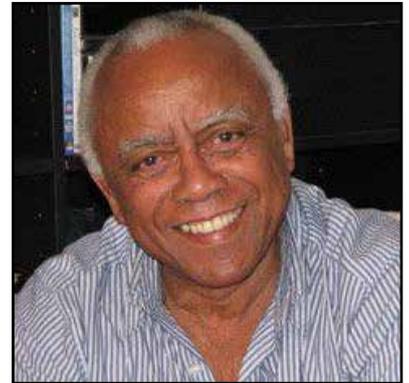
pioneering education-through-the-newspaper project.

People's College, a weekly educational supplement that was carried by the Sunday World emerged in 1977

as a response to the students' rejection of Bantu Education and the urgent need to provide education alternatives. In October 1977, along with various organisations, the Sunday World and its education supplement - People's College - was banned.

The Sunday World was courageously followed by the appearance of the Sunday Post and SACHED was able to negotiate its new project - the Learning Post - with the new newspaper. It was an eight page publication that carried material to support school based and other learners in a variety of subjects including Improving Reading Skills, Maths, Popular Science, Accountancy and African History, using new and innovative materials and methods in the learning process, influenced by Paulo Freire, to counter the passive, paternalist and rote-learning demanded by Bantu Education.

The African History course was based on a careful selection of learning material and provided an alternative world view. It was a new and radical departure from the narrow and limited Eurocentric history curriculum that existed in all secondary schools in the country. For the first time in South Africa, the readership of the weekly Sunday Post received well researched articles on African History. A new world was opened to its readers and an alternative and exciting historical perspective of African history and development was created to counter predominant racist accounts of Africa's history.



Dr Neville Alexander wrote almost all of the articles in the African History series. He was the director of SACHED's Cape Town office from 1980 to 1987 after spending 10 years on Robben Island from 1963 to 1973 and six years thereafter under house arrest. He passed away on the 27th of August 2012.

The denial and distortion of African history was part and parcel of the objectives of Bantu Education, and so in providing this course on African History, the Learning Post opened up a new and different world for its readers.

Neville Alexander, who was based in the Cape Town offices of SACHED, was the chief author of the African History series. Each week he would unfailingly send the relevant text to the Johannesburg offices for editing by Helene Perold and each week for 33 weeks, a new and exciting chapter on African History would appear. There can be little doubt about the success of this initiative. Regular feedback and readership figures demonstrated that the material was read by hundreds of thousands of people, and was often used for collective learning. There were undoubtedly some challenges as this was educationally pioneering work and the political context was hostile. SACHED had to venture into active and engaging educational methodologies, content and a commitment to creating new education possibilities.

Alexander would not have wanted the material to be used simply to glorify African history. No! His intention would have been to provide a realistic account of that history, which had to be studied and examined critically for the purposes of understanding the continent, responding to the racist and sexist accounts of it and most importantly for the purposes of changing post-colonial racist and exploitative societies.

The republishing of the African History course of Learning Post comes at a time in our country when many aspects of our education system (both Basic

and Higher) are under scrutiny. Students – through their recent actions – have now presented us with an opportunity to re-examine the history of Africa in the light of the struggles for the decolonisation of knowledge and the curriculum practices of education institutions. We can do this collectively and individually, by organising discussions around these issues, creating study circles for researching more of it, by sharing our understanding within our schools, universities and communities and by developing new and innovative texts that speaks to our lives, experiences, communities and aspirations.

By understanding this history, we can think about the kind of society that represents our best aspirations, and mobilise, organise and educate for better alternatives. Given that this series was written in 1980, it is hardly surprising that in making use of it for educational purposes, we can also update and correct some of the information contained in it. A much larger body of source material is now available. We believe that this historic publication can be used to stimulate greater interest in African History and make a vital contribution to the national debate on the decolonisation project.

John Samuel (National Director of SACHED, 1979-1991)

Enver Motala (Director of SACHED's Durban office, 1980-1990)

Salim Vally (Director of CERT)



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A proud past and the making of a future

THE discovery of Africa's history has been a long search in which written and unwritten clues have been used to piece together Africa's past.

Until very recently, most of the languages of the people living south of the Sahara Desert were not written.

The history of these peoples lay buried in ruins, graves, monuments, stories, ballads, in songs and in religious and other customs.

Remains such as the great stone wall of Zimbabwe spoke with a loud voice about a proud past. Yet they are told very little about the people who built them.

Some descriptions of life in these parts were written by Arab travellers and traders from about the 10th Century after the birth of Christ. They also wrote down some of the stories which the people told about themselves and their ancestors.

Very many of these writings still have to be used in the writing of Africa's history.

Racist bias

In the last 300 years there has been a stream of books, reports, letters, news articles and other writings about Africa south of the Sahara. They have come from European traders, soldiers, scholars and missionaries.

Most of these writings have to be used with great care. The reason is that most of the Europeans at that time believed that Africans were 'backward', 'inferior', 'underdeveloped' or 'unable to develop'. Because so much in Africa was different from what they were used to in Europe, they thought it was bad and inferior.

Only since the end of the World War II have African, European and American scholars begun to rewrite the history of Africa as the Africans see it. Only now do many scholars and writers accept that the things of Europe are not always the best model to be followed by the people's of the world.

More and more people are beginning to realise that Africa has made a great contribution to the wisdom and the culture of the world.

AFRICA: A name from Europeans

THE NAME of the African continent was determined by the people who colonised large parts of the world - The Europeans.

During the time of colonial conquest, from the 16th Century onwards, the Europeans used the word "Africa" to describe the whole continent.

Before this time the word had described only one area in the north.

The word "Africa" was first used by the people of Carthage to describe themselves to the Romans. At that time the word was used only to describe a single group of people living in the area now called Tunisia.

The Arabians called the same area "Ifriqiyah", but with the greater

European influence in the continent, the word has come down to us in its Latin form.

If the people of Asia had colonised the world instead of the Europeans, they would probably have called the continent "Sudan". The Arabian traders used the word "Sudan" to describe the darkskinned people of East and West Africa. "Sudan" means "the land of the black people".



Basil Davidson, a leading African historian, speaks to Dr Agostinho Neto, the late President of Angola and of the MPLA. Davidson is only one of the men and women from all over the world who are studying and writing the history of the continent.

LANDS OF A COMMON HERITAGE

AFRICA is often seen as a continent which stands alone and in which all the people are somehow similar. But the geography of Africa shows that it is not isolated and that there are many regional differences.

To start with, the continent of Africa is not an island. It has always been closely linked with the rest of the world, particularly Europe and Asia.

The man-made Suez Canal seems to separate Africa from Asia and Europe, but this is an artificial separation. The canal was designed in 1869 by the Frenchman Ferdinand de Lesseps to cut through the Sinai Peninsula.

For thousands of years before this, the Sinai Peninsula had formed a natural land bridge between the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe. Millions of people moved to and fro across the peninsula.

To the peoples of North Africa, Western Asia and Southern Europe who lived around the Mediterranean Sea, these three continents were the whole of the world. 'Mediterranean' comes from two Latin words and means 'the middle of the earth'.

Many developments in Africa's history can be traced back to the

constant movement of people, goods and ideas between the three continents. Developments in Europe and Asia have also been influenced by these movements for a very long stretch of human history.

In many cases different parts of Africa had less contact with each other than with other continents. The peoples of East and South-Eastern Africa, for example, traded with other peoples who lived around the Indian Ocean and were greatly influenced by them - Arabs, Iranians, Indians and Indonesians.

In North Africa the African people traded with the peoples of Southern Europe and of the Fertile Crescent (Palestine and Lebanon). There was, however, some trade between the different regions of Africa.

The geography of Africa itself explains why different regions in Africa developed so differently and unevenly. Natural barriers such as deserts, forests, mountains and simple distance have for centuries made contact between people difficult.

Many different languages developed. Some groups of people lived in isolation for long periods of time and developed their own languages. Other people moved from place to place and developed languages

together with the communities they met. All the different languages made communication between people difficult.

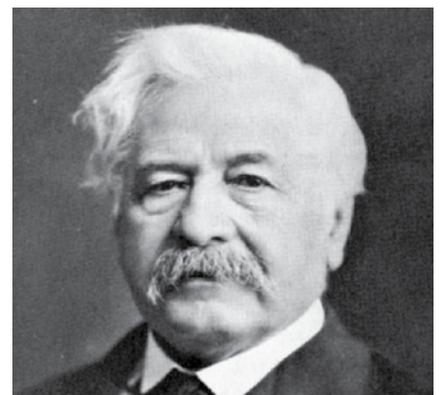
Despite these differences, it makes sense to think of Africa as one. North, West, Central, East and Southern Africa have many things in common even if it seems that their peoples are very different from one another. Many countries share political and economic problems. They have shared a history of colonialism.

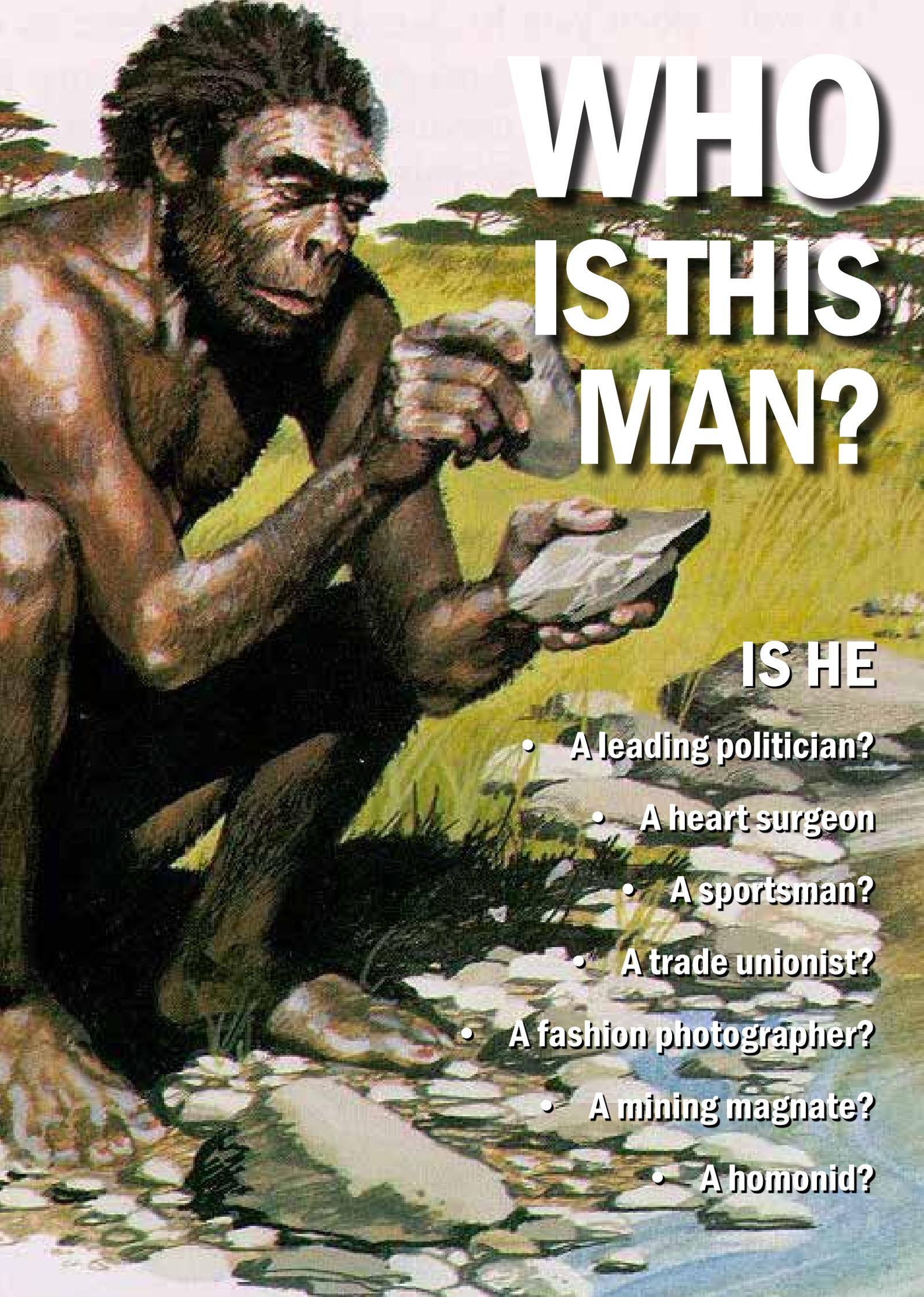
These common elements formed the basis for Kwame Nkrumah's idea of a United States of Africa.



Above: Kwame Nkrumah

Below: Ferdinand de Lesseps



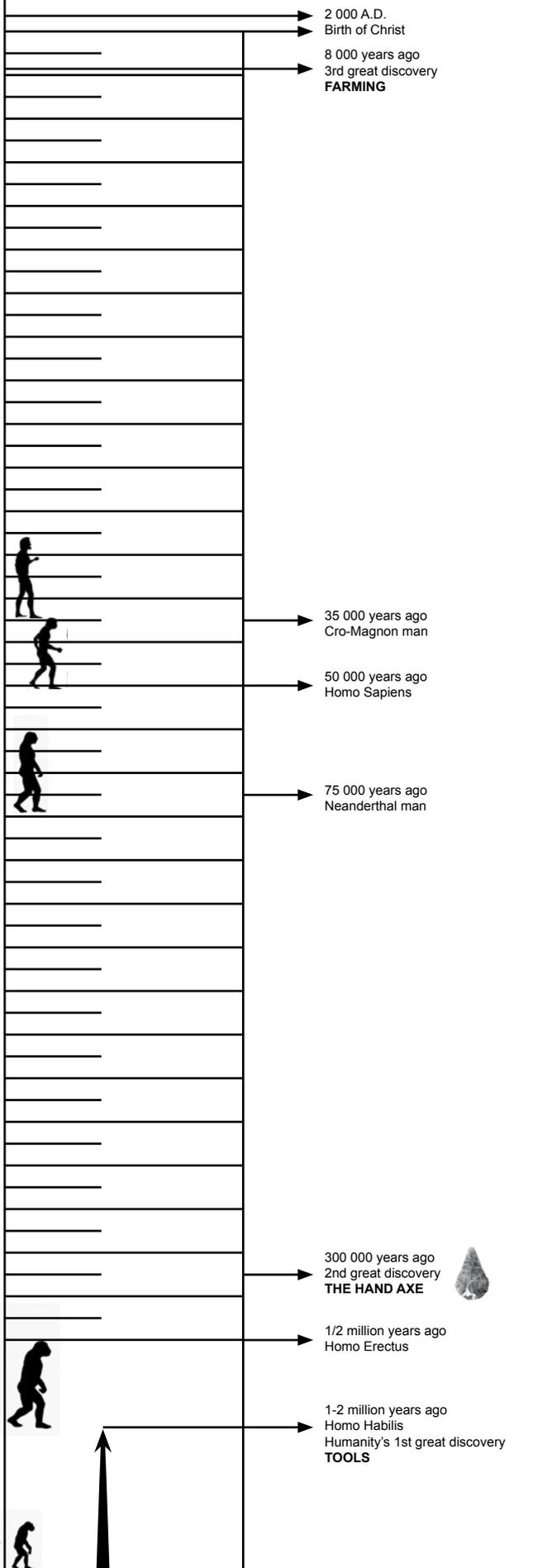


WHO IS THIS MAN?

IS HE

- **A leading politician?**
- **A heart surgeon**
- **A sportsman?**
- **A trade unionist?**
- **A fashion photographer?**
- **A mining magnate?**
- **A homonid?**

MANKIND CLIMBS THE LADDER OF TIME



The first signs of human life in AFRICA

AFRICA is the “cradle of humanity”. In no other part of the world have the signs of man’s earliest beginnings been traced back so far.

The history of human beings stretches back for at least 2-million years. Some experts say it goes back for 12 million years.

About 2-million years ago, manlike creatures (called hominids) began making and using tools somewhere in East Africa. Groups of hominids moved in different directions and in time these tools and customs spread thinly throughout the world.

These creatures lived among other animals that were often much more powerful than they were. They had to find ways of surviving.

On the day that the first of these hominids picked up a stone to throw at another animal (either in self-defence or to kill for food) there took place the most important revolution in the whole history of humanity. For a stone, used like this in those early times, became the first tool. These tools gave the weak hominid a chance to survive.

Changes in the climate of the world (centuries of ice, centuries of rain, centuries of drought) made life difficult. Only those creatures that could cope with these changes could survive.

Over thousands of years they learnt how to make fire and to cook. They started burying their dead. Their societies developed the Saharan region rules of living and of order. We can be sure that they prayed to various gods, sang songs, danced, and used paint on their bodies.

Up to this point, the story of humanity is more or less the same all over the world. Then suddenly, about 12 000 years ago, the story of Africa goes its own way.

Basil Davidson, one of the best writers of the history of Africa, says:

“Pastures appeared. Rivers flowed. The land became fertile.” People from North Africa and from West-Central moved into Europe and Asia.

Stone tools such as axes, arrowheads and knives, gave the hominids a chance to survive



THE FARMING REVOLUTION

HUMANITY'S first great discovery was how to make tools. The second was how to make fire. And the third was how to farm.

Farming was discovered about 8000 years ago when people planted wild seeds and began to grow their own food. Starting in the fertile river valleys of the Middle East (the areas today known as Iran and Iraq), the art of farming gradually spread throughout the world.

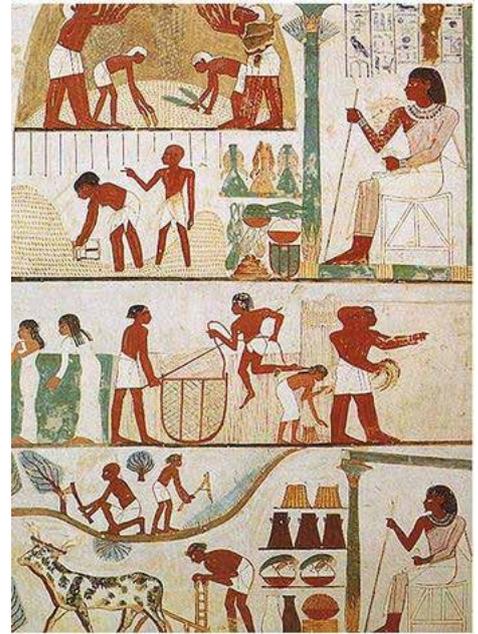
Six thousand years ago Africans in the valley of the Nile River in Egypt were growing food and ploughing the soil. From Egypt the knowledge of farming spread to the south and into the Sahara in the west.

By 2300 BC, the people of the Sahara had learnt to raise cattle and to grow crops and vegetables.

From the Sahara belt this neolithic revolution, as it is called, spread to the rest of Africa south of the Sahara.

All the farming at this time was done with stone tools. Later on the discovery of ways of smelting metals once again led to revolutionary changes in the way people lived and worked.

With the development of farming came a rapid increase in the number of human beings on earth. Having discovered the secret of farming, people could control their supply of food. They could produce more than they needed at any one time. In other words, they produced a **SURPLUS**.



This surplus brought about changes in the way their lives were organised.

This “mingling” of peoples gave rise to important changes in the history of Africa. Grain was stored, to be looked after, and it had to be distributed. Groups of people now came into being whose special duty it was to store the surplus food, to protect it and to distribute it.

Every black man is an African?

MANY PEOPLE today think that all the original inhabitants of Africa were black people, but this is not so. For thousands of years Africa has been inhabited by people of different skin colours.

The people of Africa, and those throughout the world, developed from a particular group of hominids who had been in Africa for more than 2-million years.

Physical differences between human beings developed over tens of thousands of years. 7 000 years ago there were three main types of human beings in Africa:

- The short, yellow-skinned San-type living mainly in the South and in the rain forests of Central Africa.

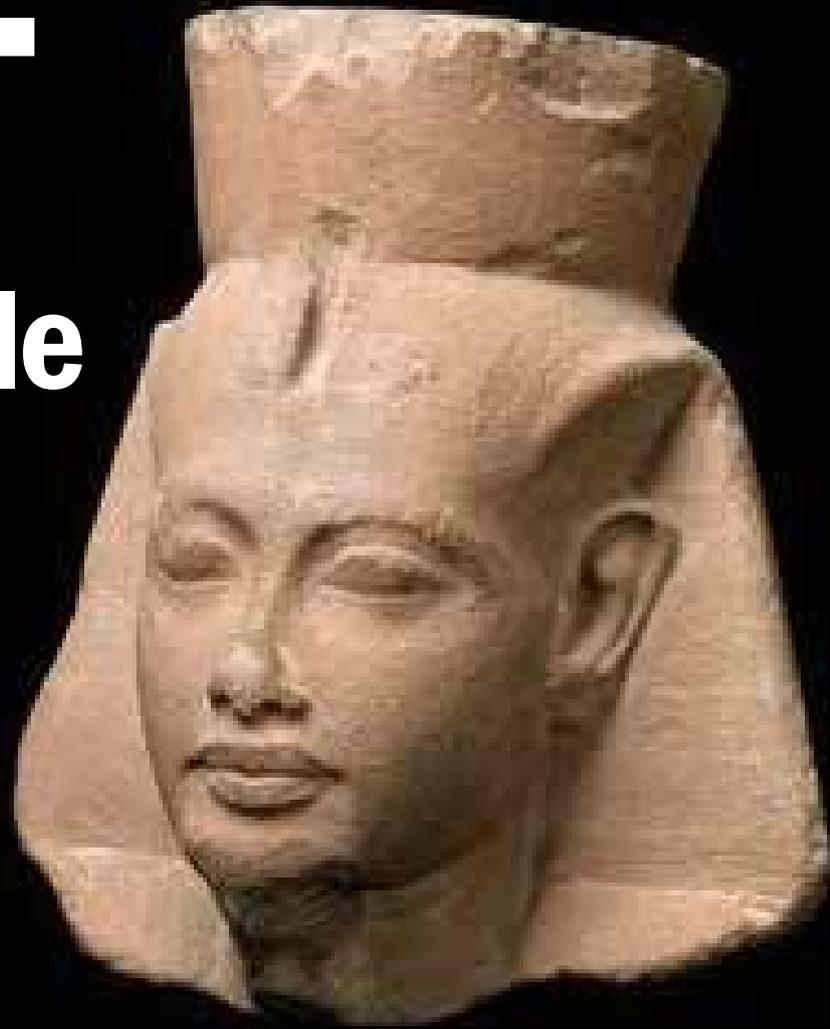
- The short-to-medium, fair-skinned Mediterranean type living mainly in North and East Africa.
- The tall-to-medium, dark-skinned Sudanic type living in large numbers in most parts of Africa.

There were many other in-between groups as well. Analysis has shown that the San-type of people (so-called) “Bushmen” and Sudanic-type (so-called) “Negroes” developed from largely the same ancestors. It is not clear what these ancestors looked like.

This very short description shows that it is nonsense to think that only the Sudanic types were or are “Africans”. This is one of the lies of racism.

EGYPT

Gift of the Nile



IN the fertile valley of the great Nile River there arose one of the first and one of the greatest civilisations of the ancient world.

Egypt so said the Greek writer Herodotus was “the gift of the Nile”. It was a gift not only to Africa but to the whole of humanity. In many ways the future of ancient Egypt became one of the foundations of our modern world.

The hieroglyphic system of writing was one of Egypt’s most important inventions. Branches of learning such as astronomy (the study of heavenly bodies), mathematics, and the measurement of time (eg the calendar) were either invented or improved by the Egyptian scholars. Much of the famous learning of Greece and Rome must be traced back to its origin in Egypt.

Pyramids, tombs and temples still speak of the power and wealth

of the upper classes of Egypt. These great buildings were closely connected to the religious beliefs of the Egyptians.

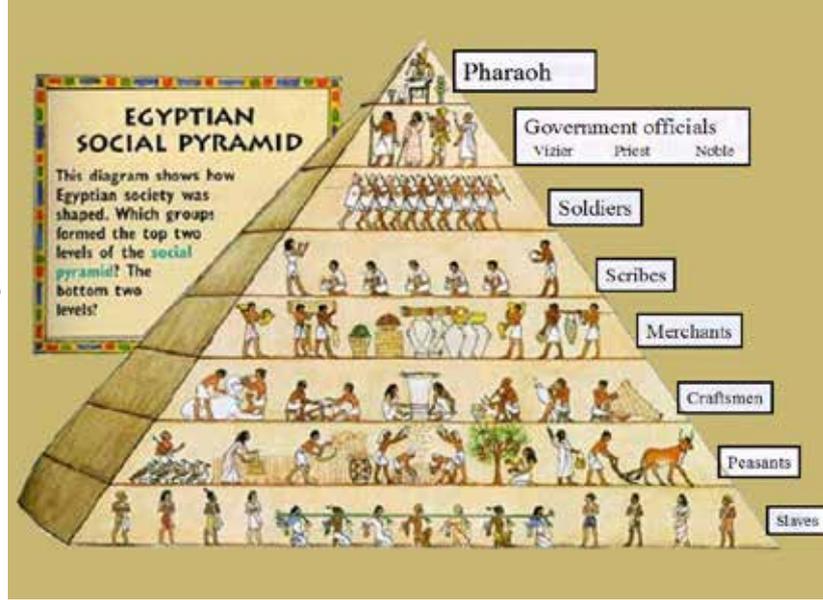
They were built because the Egyptians came to believe in a life after death. They believed that when people died they should take with them many of the things they used in life. This explains why archaeologists have found whole rooms full of furniture and clothes in some tombs. Even the servants of the rich and powerful people had to die with their masters so as to accompany them into the other world.

How did the African people of Egypt produce this complex civilization almost 5 000 years ago?

A pink sandstone head of Amon, father and emperor of the Egyptian gods. The face is in fact that of Tutenkhamen, an Egyptian pharaoh who came to power in 1347 BC when he was only nine years old and who died when he was 18. Tutenkhamen was one of the less important Egyptian kings, but is well-known today because of the discovery of his tomb only 58 years ago. His tomb was well hidden and was one of the few to survive intact for thousands of years.

AFRICA'S first govt develops in Egypt

FARMING, a settled way of life and the production to last a whole year were the major reasons why Africa's first system of government developed in Egypt.



Some 6 000 years ago people living in the fertile valley of the Nile river started farming. Because the Nile valley was so fertile their efforts were very successful, and soon enormous changes came about in their way of life.

They no longer had to trek from one place to another in search of food. Instead they settled down in villages and grew enough food to last them the whole year until the next harvest came around.

Farming meant hard work. The floods and rains only came for three or four months each year. So water had to be stored in dams and canals built to wet the soil in the dry season.

These canals had to be kept in order since the people's lives depended

on them. And it was because of these needs that government became necessary.

People had to work regularly in order to plant, irrigate the land and harvest the crops. In order to make sure they did so, some kind of police force became necessary. Overseers and supervisors came into being.

It was necessary to keep a record of what happened every year – the size of the harvest, the amount of rain and when the rains came. For this purpose people who could write and count (clerks) were needed. (Read the story of Joseph in the Old Testament).

Only very few people learned these secrets. Usually only a few priests could read, write and count. This caste of priests thus became very powerful.

At the head of the government was placed the chief or King. In Egyptian language, he was called the pharaoh, a word which meant 'the great house'. Later on people believed he was the son of a God and he was worshipped as a god.

Of course these kings, priests, clerks and supervisors had no time to work in the fields like the rest of the "common people". But, like everyone else, they had to eat and live in houses and wear clothes.

So they got what they wanted out of the surplus produced by the people in the fields. The people who farmed had to make sure they grew enough food for themselves and for the people in government. This is how different classes of people came into being.

Calendars describe events

PEOPLE'S in different parts of the world have for centuries used different calendars. The way in which historians describe periods in history depends on the calendar they use.

Christian nations throughout the world date their years from the supposed date of Christ's birth. They describe all the years before Christ's birth as Before Christ (BC). All the years since Christ's birth are called *Anno Domini* (AD) meaning 'in the year of our Lord'.

Many historians today use this form of dating and this is why it is being used in the LEARNING POST Africa series. There are other calendars which are still used today. The Jews count their years from the time in which

they thought the world was created – 5740 years ago.

The Muslims count their years from the flight of Mohammed from Mecca, 1318 years ago.

The ancient Egyptians, like most other people at the time, dated important events according to the year of the reign of the monarch (or chief) in which they occurred. For example, they might have said that great floods occurred "in the fifth year of the reign of Queen Hatsheput."

The Two Kingdoms

(3200 BC – 2680 BC)



TWO kingdoms were created in Egypt: one in the Nile Delta and one further North. They grew out of the simple farming villages established during the Neolithic revolution.

During this period the basis of Egyptian civilization was created. The two kingdoms were later united under the pharaoh Narmer. The capital was established at Memphis.

The Old Kingdom

(2680 BC – 2100 BC)



DURING this period the great pyramids of Gizeh were built. The country was well-off, especially the upper classes.

There was trade overland and over sea with all the neighbouring countries. Large expeditions were sent to the south and to the west to find out what other people could offer in trade. The explorers also went because they wanted to know what was happening in other countries.

The mighty pharaohs of this time conquered more land. The Old Kingdom grew in size and wealth.

The Middle Kingdom

(2100 BC – 1970 BC)



THIS was one of the most glorious periods of ancient Egypt. Temples, tombs, pyramids were built in large numbers. The capital was moved to Thebes in the south.

After about 350 years of the Middle Kingdom it was over-run by invading people from Asia. Those were the Hyskos. ('Hyskos' comes from an Egyptian word meaning Chiefs of foreign lands'.)

They had two advantages over the Egyptians. They were superior in their military technique because they used horses and chariots (iron wagons). Most important they had weapons of iron.

For all these thousands of years, the powerful Egyptians had never really used iron. Their civilization was based on bronze, a mixture of copper and tin. It was only around 650 BC that they began to use iron on a large scale.

It was certainly because of their superior iron weapons that the Hyskos defeated the generals of the Middle Kingdom.

FIVE PERIODS in Egypt's long history

FOR most of Egypt's long history it seemed as if nothing ever changed. The Kingdom seemed to be as solid as the unsmiling Sphinx. Yet, under the calm surface of things there was continual change taking place. The history of Egypt can be divided into five main periods. A brief glance at each of these shows that changes did take place over almost 4 000 years.

The New Kingdom

(1580 BC – 1150 BC)



IN this period the Hyskos were driven out. Under pharaohs like Queen Hatsheput and Ikhnaton (married to Queen Nefertiti), Egyptian power and glory were again established.

This is one of the great periods of Egyptian civilization. During this time the beautiful temples at Luxor and Karnak were built in honour of the god Amon. But towards the end of this period, long and costly wars had to be fought against many enemies from Asia and from Africa. Of these the most important and most dangerous were the Libyan Berbers. These were nomads (wandering herds-men) who found it more and more difficult to survive in the Sahara region. The Sahara had begun to dry up rapidly and the Berbers attacked Egypt in an effort to get more fertile land.

Towards the end of this period, therefore, the power of the pharaohs became weaker and weaker.

The Late Period

(1150 BC – 640 BC)



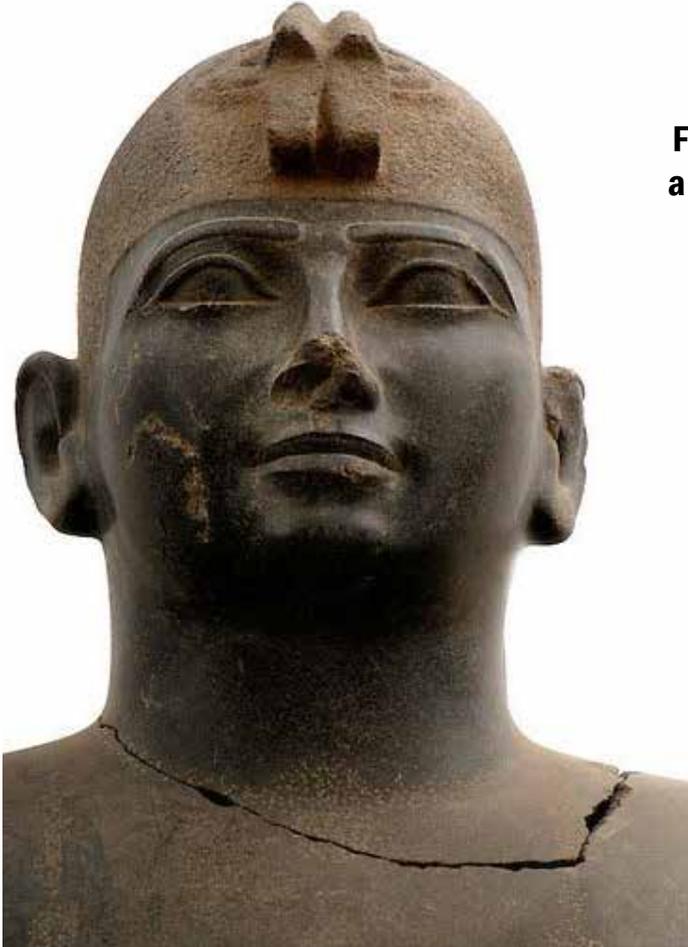
THE Late period saw the collapse of the Egyptian pharaohs. At first the Libyan Berbers and then the Greeks (Alexander the Great) conquered Egypt. Cleopatra, the famous queen was the last of the Greek rulers.

In 30 BC Egypt was conquered by the Romans and became a province – a kind of colony of the Roman Empire. Basil Davidson describes these last years in this way:

"The 'gift of the Nile' became a gift to the great city of Rome, capital of the Roman Empire, feeding the Roman Empire, feeding the Roman population with its harvests of corn; every Egyptian protest was put down by force of arms."

Egypt remained a Roman province for 670 years. In 640 AD the Muslim Arabs conquered the territory and the modern history of Egypt begins.

The old kingdom of Kush



King Taharqa (690-664 BC), one of the Kushite kings who also ruled as pharaoh over Egypt. This statue is carved from black granite and stands nearly four meters high. It was found at a temple near Napata, the first capital of Kush.

FOUR hundred and fifty years after the birth of Christ a Greek historian, Herodotus, visited Egypt and wrote the following about the lands lying to the south:

“**H**ere gold is found in great abundance, and huge elephants, and ebony, and all sorts of trees growing wild. The men, too, are the tallest in the world, the best-looking, and the longest-lived.”

He was describing the kingdom of Kush, the greatest of the ancient civilizations of inner Africa.

Kush was a kingdom built in two main stages. In the first stage the area was strongly influenced by Egypt.

Throughout the history of ancient Egypt the governments of the pharaohs had searched for natural boundaries which would protect them against invaders, and had searched for gold. In the process they conquered the surrounding people's, such as the Kushites, and took their lands,

Kush was conquered by Egypt in about 1500 BC, and became something of an Egyptian colony for about 400 year. During this time the people of Kush came to live and think more and more like their colonial masters.

But in about 1100 BC the New Kingdom of Egypt collapsed and the Kushites broke away from Egypt, setting up their own state. Four hundred years later they had become so powerful that they ruled in Egypt as pharaohs for 60 years.

In 663 BC the Kushite pharaohs were defeated by the Assyrians who invaded Egypt, and they withdrew to their own country. They decided to rule the kingdom of Kush

from their capital in Napata later transferring the capital to Meroe, in the South.

Second stage

It was from Meroe that the Kingdom of Kush entered the second and greater stage of its development. Today temples, pyramids and many other stone monuments still speak of the departed glory of this ancient civilization.

Meroe was rich in iron and it was here that the people of Kush learnt how to smelt and forge iron. Even today, on the sites of ancient Meroe, one can see huge slag heaps, the result of iron mining. From Meroe the knowledge of iron working reached many neighbouring people in Africa.

For centuries Kush was a world power. Its people traded with many nations, as far afield as India and

Early Ethiopia

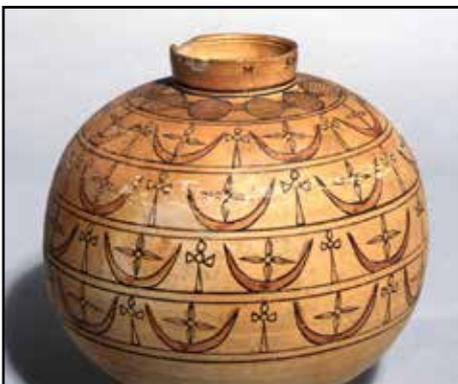


THE PARENT of modern Ethiopia and one of the earliest Christian states in Africa – this was the Kingdom of Axum, the second of the great civilization to arise in the footsteps of Egypt.

Axum was established as a direct result of events which took place in the Arabian peninsula. For many centuries people from the area today known as Yemen crossed into Africa and settled in Ethiopia.

Most of these people were skilled farmers who quickly mingled with the local people. By 300 BC one of these groups had gained control of the area and established the Kingdom of Axum.

Axum grew by means of trade and war. Greek, Iranian and Indian merchants came to the ports of Axum to trade for ivory, tortoise shell, ebony and gold which were drawn from the Ethiopian countryside. By 400 AD Axum was the main trading center between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.



MEROE in the Kingdom of Kush was particularly well known for the brilliance and originality of the painted pottery.

Many wars were fought – against Kush in the north, against Ethiopian people's in the south and even against the old Yemenite homeland across the straits. Power, trade and trade routes were the main causes of these wars.

The new state was greatly influenced by Arabia. People from the Yemen continued to settle in Axum. They were the most powerful group in the kingdom and so the local people gradually accepted (but also changed) their customs, languages and ideas.

But as time went on, Jewish and Greek influence also became important in Axum. It was through Greek traders and travellers that the Christian religion was brought to the Ethiopian state.

By the end of the 4th century AD there were already many Christians in Axum and soon Christianity was to become deeply rooted in the country. This had a very important effect on the culture of the people. Ethiopian Christianity was shaped by Syrian and Greek Christian beliefs and practices, as well as orthodox Jewish practices.

The Axumites left magnificent stone monuments to the world, as well as many writings. They used the kind of writing their Arabian ancestors had used. But they made many changes to suit the new

language that was being created by the mingling of the peoples.

This is what Basil Davidson says about the writing: "This national form of writing was done by learned monks, and the Ethiopian Church developed a rich literature which told of its long history as well as its religious beliefs. . ."

The Kingdom of Axum lasted for almost 1 000 years. For a long time the kings of Axum also ruled over the lands of South Arabia, but eventually they were driven out by an Iranian force.

This, together with the conquest of Egypt by the Muslim Arabs in 840 AD, led to the rapid decline and the eventual fall of Axum.

The Red Sea trade was destroyed. Axum itself was attacked by the Bejas, a people who lived in the country surrounding Axum. They waged a number of wars against Axum and shattered the foundation of the kingdom's wealth and prosperity. Axum's trade links with India and the Mediterranean were broken.

What remained of the ancient kingdom of Axum became the basis for present day Ethiopia.



Traders of the SAHARA

BEFORE and during the time of Christ, the north coast of Africa was dominated by a fiercely independent African people – THE BERBERS.

Their ancestors had lived in the Sahara region when it was still a very fertile area with much water, grass and trees. Here they hunted for food, and later started growing crops and herding cattle.

When the Sahara began to dry up (after 2000 BC) these people moved away in different directions, in search of fertile land and water.

Some went southwards. Some went east towards the Nile river, and attacked the Egyptians in order to settle there. A few remained in the drying Sahara and learnt to live with little water: they settled in oases or travelled from one well to another. Today the descendants of these early Saharans are still there – they are the Taureg, the veiled people of the desert.

But most of the Saharan people moved north-westwards into the areas now called Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria and Tunisia. These areas together are known as the Maghrib (from an Arabic word meaning “the west”).

Nearly all these people's of the Sahara and North Africa belonged to one large group. They all spoke dialects of the same language age. This language was called Berber and it has become the custom to call the people Berbers.

A few groups settled down and created states in north and in west Africa, but most of the Berber-speaking peoples continued their nomadic lives, moving around with their animals.

Throughout the long history of the Berber peoples there was never any united Berber state. Only occasionally did they form military alliances to defend themselves against foreign invaders.

Moving as they did, the Berbers also traded in goods between the coast and the interior. In time they became the masters of the Sahara desert.

The most important trading links that they established were those between the coastal peoples of north-west Africa and the people of the western Sudan south of the Sahara desert. From the western

Sudan and the interior they brought goods such as gold and ivory. These they exchanged at the coast for cloth, olive oil, corn and other goods.

In the course of time, regular caravan (trade) routes across the desert were established. One of these went via Morocco and Mauritania while another went over the Hoggar mountains.

At that time the climate of the Sahara was not as harsh as it is today and the Berber traders used horses and chariots to travel across the desert. Even today one can see drawings of chariots and horses on rocks along the main trade routes. These drawings were made by the Berber traders long ago.

In fact the Berbers became famous in many other lands for the speed and beauty of their horses. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, it was from the Berbers that the Greeks first learned the skill of harnessing four horses to a chariot.



Camels bring big changes

AROUND the time of the birth of Christ the Berber people's made a discovery which did much to change the course of History in West Africa: they discovered the value of the Arabian camel.

The camel was introduced into Africa by the Romans who at that time were in control of Arabia, Egypt and much of North Africa.

With its broad feet the camel could travel through the desert much faster than horses could. It could also go without water for as long as 10 days.

The camel became known as the "ship of the desert" and by using it the Berbers could now greatly increase the amount of trade.

Increased trade in turn brought about many changes in the countries lying south of the Sahara. New Berber kingdoms came into being. There were the earliest foundations of the powerful kingdoms which later developed in West Africa, such as the empire of Ghana.

THE early trans-Saharan trade was useful to the Berbers but attracted foreigners as well.

Phoenicians from Syria established and developed the great trading city of Carthage, but were careful to retain their independence.

Still later, large parts of North Africa (including Carthage) were conquered and ruled by the Romans. During this time, too, the Berbers fiercely guarded their independence, as the Tunisian legend "Unwelcome Miracle" on this page shows.

Unwelcome Miracle

ROME conquered much of North Africa around the time of the birth of Christ, but the proud independent Berber people never submitted willingly to these foreign masters – as this legend from Tunisia shows.

When the Romans attacked our country it was governed by a wise Berber monarch.

However, this ruler had a daughter who was astonishingly beautiful. As soon as the Roman leader saw her he fell deeply in love and asked for her hand.

The Berber princess who had a proud and noble soul refused to become the wife of the man who had enslaved her country. "Ask me for whatever you wish and I shall deposit it at your feet", said the Roman leader, "but consent to share my life."

And the princess replied "Let the united waters of the Zaghouan River and the Djouggar river be

brought to Carthage without touching the earth, and I shall consent."

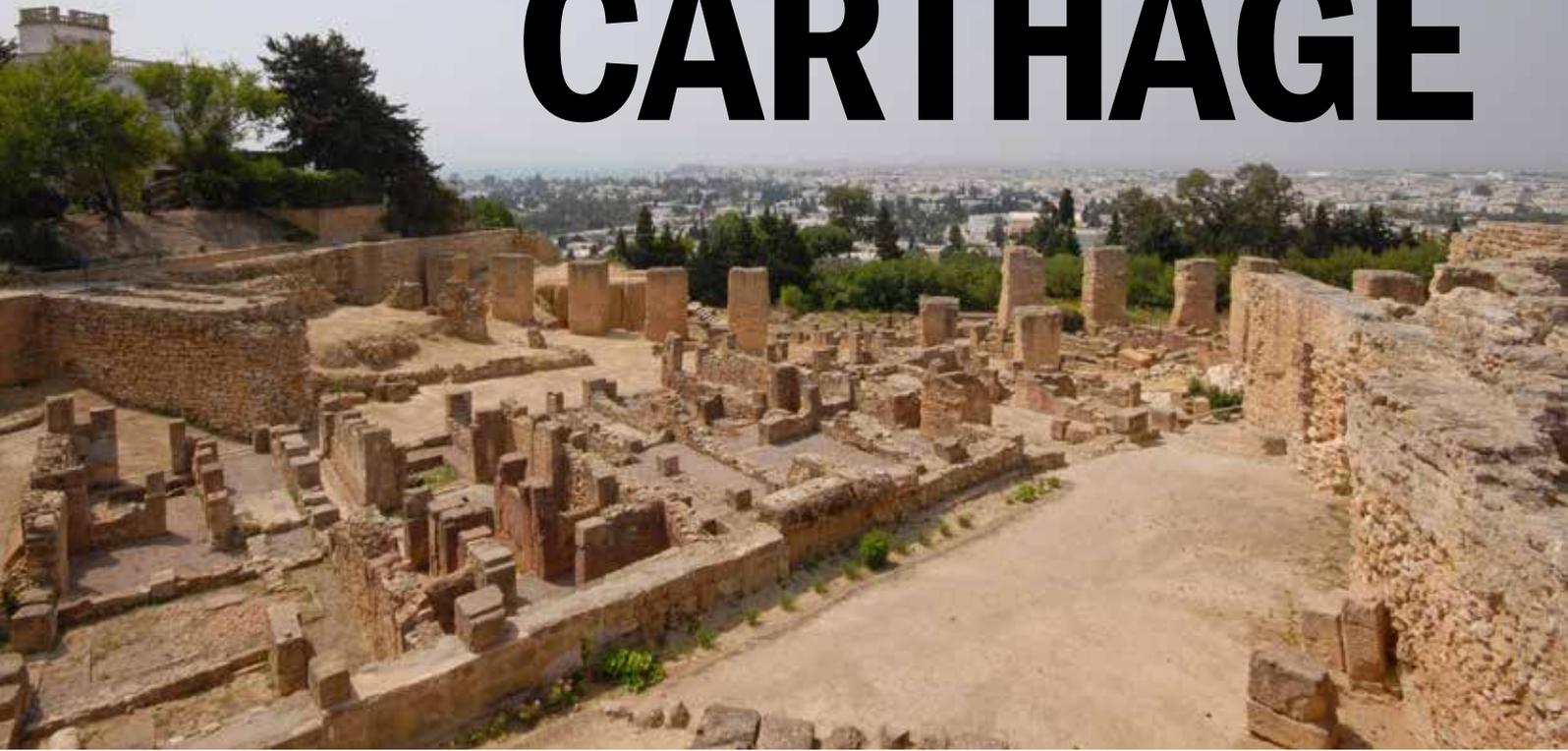
She believed, poor child, that her consent would depend on an impossible condition. But for the Romans nothing was impossible and their leader ordered the construction of the most remarkable aqueduct anyone had ever seen.

One by one the arches, of which the ruins are still visible, rose towards the sky. At last the day came when the waters of the Zaghouan and the Djouggar flowed through the pipes. The rivers had been united by the forces of men,

The Roman leader then led the princess to this wonder built for her. In order to admire fully the Roman masterpiece the princess asked if she could climb to the top of one of the arches.

As soon as she reached that height she looked over the country of her birth, flung herself into space and was killed.

CARTHAGE



African city rivals Rome for control of Mediterranean trade

THE City of Carthage, situated on the shores of northwest Africa, was for a long time one of the wealthiest and most powerful trading cities in the Mediterranean.

Much of its wealth was the result of close links established with the African peoples who knew the secrets of the Sahara desert – the Berbers.

Carthage was established 800 or 900 years before Christ by a trading people called the Phoenicians. They came from the region where Syria now lies and spoke a Semitic language similar to the Arabs and Jews.

The Phoenicians traded in metals and established halfway stations along the coast at which their ships could call. In some cases these halfway stations became trading posts if the local people had any goods to offer in exchange.

Carthage was one such case. From its small beginnings it grew so strong that for many years it competed against Rome for control of the Mediterranean world. One of the reasons for its strength was that the Carthaginian traders developed links with the Berbers

who controlled the trans-Saharan trade. From West Africa the Berbers brought gold which they traded for cloth and food stuffs at the coast.

Many wars were fought between Carthage and Rome (see next page). Finally the Roman armies destroyed Carthage in 146 BC.



HANNIBAL

The general who hated Romans

DURING the many wars that were fought between Carthage and Rome there was one time when the Carthaginian army, made up largely of Berber-speaking Africans, almost conquered Rome itself.

This army was under the leadership of Hannibal, a famous Carthaginian general. When he was only nine years old Hannibal's father made him swear that he would always hate the Romans. Many years later Hannibal

described the oath to the King of Syria, Antiochus, an ally of his:

“My father took me by the right hand and led me to the alter and made me swear that I would never be friends with Rome.

‘So long then, Antiochus, as your policy is one of hostility to Rome, you may feel quite secure of having in me a most thorough-going supporter. But if ever you make friends with her you will need to be on your guard against me; for there is nothing in my power that I would not do against her.’”

Hannibal crossed into Europe with a huge army of Berber soldiers, horses and elephants. He led his army across the snow covered mountains of the Alps and into Italy where he attacked the city of Rome. Eventually, however he was forced to retreat.

Several years later the Romans threatened to attack Carthage once more unless Hannibal was handed over to them. Hannibal took poison so that he would not fall into Roman hands.





ISLAM

Changes Africa

ISLAM, the religion founded by the Prophet Muhammed, made a tremendous impact on the African continent from the seventh to the 12th centuries.

Islam became not just a religion, but a complete way of life.

The Muslims (the followers of Islam) brought political stability and economic recovery to all the countries which they conquered.

Prophet Muhammed was born in AD 570 and led a very ordinary life as a camel-driver, until he began to have visions in which the Angel Gabriel brought him messages from Allah (God). He began to preach to the people of Mecca in Arabia where he lived. His words formed the KORAN which is the holy book of Islam.

For Muslims, the Koran is not just a guide to religion but forms the basis of their lives, their moral code and their relationship to others.

The rules laid down in the Koran state that:

- All Muslims believe in Allah as the only God.
- All Muslims must respond to the call to prayer five times a day.
- All Muslims must give money to the poor and for upkeep of Mosques.
- All Muslims must observe RAMADAN, a 30-day fast when

they cannot eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. Muslims never drink alcohol or eat pork.

- All Muslims must go on a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, Islam's most holy cities, at least once in their lifetimes if they have the means.

During historic times this pilgrimage meant months of travelling through the desert and many died in the attempt.

The strict code of life united Muslims all over the world.

The spread of Islam

ON July 16, 622, four men travelling on two camels left Mecca to spread the word of Islam. Within as few as 22 years the movement of religious and political revolution begun by Muhammad, had won the whole of Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries, and was everywhere planning new departures.

Over the next few 100 years vast areas of Africa and Europe were conquered. But the really impressive

aspects of these conquests was not so much the speed with which they were accomplished, but the political stability and economic recovery which followed in their wake. In Africa, Asia and Spain a Muslim victory laid the foundation for a civilisation which united men of religion, learning and philosophy. Social progress was far ahead of Europe.

Muslim armies spread out in all directions from Arabia. We can trace these three main routes:

- Middle Eastern countries, North Africa and Spain.
- West Africa.
- East Africa.

The Spread of Islam

to Middle East, North Africa and Spain

FOUR YEARS after Muhammad's death in AD 632 the Muslim armies had conquered Syria and Persia. Then they moved west to Egypt and took the city of Alexandria. Within 50 years they had spread right across North Africa to Morocco.

After conquering these countries the Muslims created new towns and cities and revived the old ones. Fez, established in AD 808, was one of the first Arab cities in North Africa.

Later cities such as Medea, Miliana, Algiers and Marrakesh were established, and remained centers of Islamic culture right up to the 16th century.

Among the African military chiefs who converted to Islam during the Arab invasion of Morocco was a man called TARIK.

In AD 711 an African army, led by Tarik, landed on a promontory (small rocky island) south of Spain. They named the promontory "GEBEL TARIK" which means "hill of Tarik" and which later became known as "Gibraltar". From Gibraltar, Tarik's army conquered the whole of Spain. These Islamic Africans became known as the "MOORS".

After conquering Spain and Portugal the Muslim armies reached France. They were finally defeated in 723 AD at the Battle of POITIERS. So Islam never reached any further in Europe.

...to West Africa

AS you can see on the map, to reach West Africa from Arabia, the Muslims had to cross the Sahara desert.

Whereas the spread of Islam across North Africa to Spain was very fast, the spread to West Africa was slower and different in the way it was done.

Towns on the edge of Sahara desert became centers of Arab government. The Berber tribesman came to these towns to trade. Many learned Arabic

and became converted to Islam. They then took the knowledge of Islam with them as they travelled along the caravan routes through the Sahara.

By the 19th century, the Arabs, lured by the gold trade, had reached the Lake Chad area and Ghana. Islam had a tremendous impact in these regions:

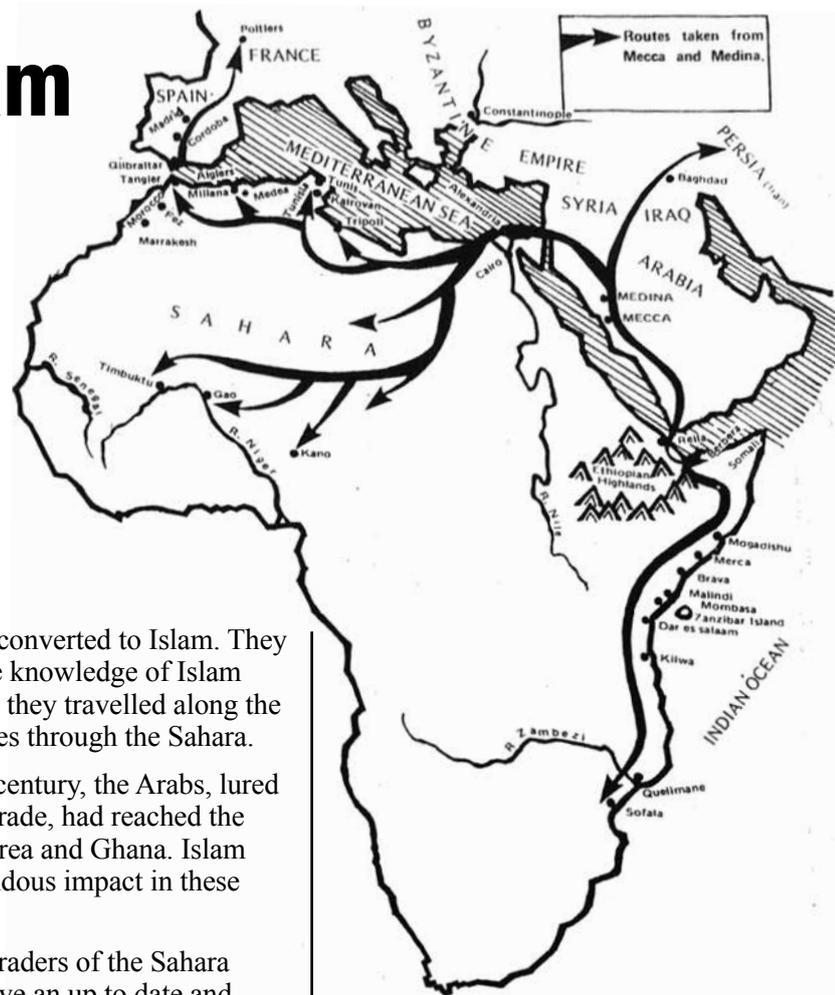
- For the traders of the Sahara Islam gave an up to date and efficient set of commercial customs and credit procedures.
- Governments changed. Islam brought education and soon an educated elite emerged.
- Towns and cities developed. In the 15th century Timbuktu was the educational and commercial metropolis of the Sudan. The university produced historians, doctors, judges and priests, all educated at state expense.

Some scholars from Sudan went on lecture tours and set up schools in Hausaland which later became part of Nigeria.

...to East Africa

ISLAM spread to East Africa through TRADE. Traders from Arabia and the Persian Gulf had always been attracted to the East Africa coast by valuable goods such as gold, ivory and tortoise shell.

Another important item was human beings who could be made to work. In other words the trade in SLAVES became one of the major links between Arabia and East Africa.



Although the nature and scale of this Arab slave trade changed in the course of time, it continued well into our own century.

Indeed, there is reason to believe that even today there is some trade in human beings in this region. Today, this trade is illegal and offenders are severely punished. Islamic law and custom tolerated slavery except that it forbade the slavery of fellow Muslims.

Many captured slaves turned to Islam because it meant that they could eventually become free people.

A Somali-Arab culture developed in coastal trading towns such as Zeila, Berbera and Mogadishu and later Malindi, Mombasa, Dar-Es-Salaam and Kilwa. By the 10th century they had reached Sofala just South of the river Zambezi.

Arab settlers intermarried with local Africans. They kept their Muslim faith but developed their own languages, such as Swahili which is still spoken in East Africa today.



THE GLORY OF MOORISH SPAIN

The Moorish influence in Spain can still be seen today, in all its splendor. They built magnificent cities such as CÓRDOBA, with its beautiful mosques, university and other public buildings, all decorated in elaborate Arab style. Suburbs in Córdoba stretched for 40 kms, streets were paved and lit with lamps.

The city was full of public gardens and fountains. All the children went to school and there were public libraries. The new government improved the countryside as well – irrigation schemes were set up and new crops and fertilizers were introduced. It is difficult for us to believe that this advanced civilization was developed in the 8th century A.D. and lasted until the 15th century. Scholars from all over Europe visited Spain to learn Philosophy, Mathematics, Astronomy and Medicine.

Named by a golden past

LAST month, after a long, hard struggle, Zimbabwe won its independence. Along with a change of government, come a change of name. Rhodesia gave way to Zimbabwe.

In adopting this new name, the people of Zimbabwe are following in the footsteps of other African countries who won the battle for independence in the 60's.

With independence, a host of new names changed the face of the map of Africa. Gold Coast became Mali, Nyasaland became Malawi, Dahomey is now Benin. And some people are saying that one day South Africa will be Azania.

In choosing new names, the people of independent Africa turned to the rich and ancient past of their continent.

Ghana, Mali, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Benin and Azania. These names and many others were illustrious kingdoms, states and empires that flourished for hundreds of centuries in pre-colonial Africa.

So the past became the present, and the future... Africa discovered her roots.



THIS sensitively designed statuette reflects the sophistication of the ancient West African empires.

AFRICA - HEART OF WORLD TRADE

IN Africa trade brought wealth and wealth gave rise to powerful kingdoms.

Pre-colonial Africa was the centre of a massive international trading network. Trade links stretched from West Africa to Europe and from East Africa to Asia and China.

Some regions were ideally situated to take advantage of the wealth generated by this trade.

Firstly coastal kingdoms sprang up. These kingdoms monopolised the thriving trade that passed through their ports.

Secondly, kingdoms farther inland benefited from trade. It was these kingdoms that produced the gold and ivory so desired by Arabic and other traders.

The kingdoms of Africa flourished at different times in different places:

West Africa

Ghana stretched from AD 500 to AD 1200 when it was taken over by Mali.

Mali came to power in 1200 AD and lasted until AD 1500 when Songhai conquered it.

Songhai was at the height of its power by 1500 AD but was defeated

by Moroccans in 1591.

East Africa

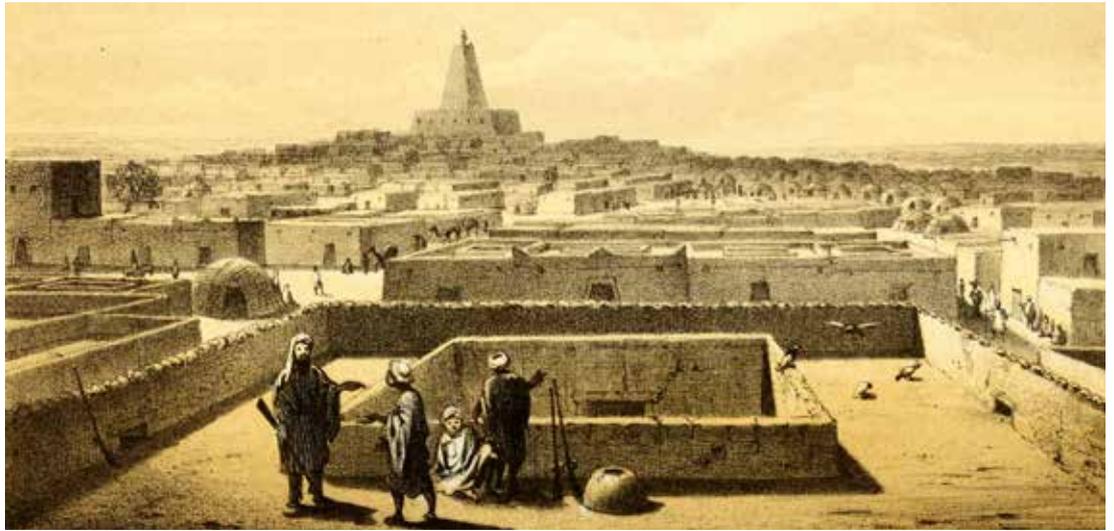
First Arab traders were visiting the coast before the birth of Christ. Around AD 700, the cities of East Africa began a period of growth. By AD 1200, these trading cities reached their peak. By AD 1500 they had declined.

Southern Africa

Shona people have lived in the Zimbabwe area since about AD 800. They began building Great Zimbabwe in the twelfth century. Monomotapa was the most powerful kingdom beginning in about 1400.

Africa's fine cities

THESE are the finest cities, their people are amongst the most civilised I have ever met, said an Arab traveler Ibn Muhammed, on his return from a tour of the West African kingdoms in the sixteenth century.



Timbuktu was an important town and university centre of the West African kingdoms.

These kingdoms and empires flourished in the fertile soil of West Africa between the years A.D. 500-1470.

The names of these empires – Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Kanem-Bornu, Benin and Hausa – were to become legendary throughout Africa and Europe. And even when invading Moroccans destroyed the last of the empires in 1591 their names lived on – mainly in oral accounts and the writings of Arab travelers.

The West African kingdoms were built on the power and wealth of the trade routes that spread from Africa to Europe and Asia. These kingdoms were the source of gold trade across the Sahara to the money houses of Europe.

Along the trade routes travelled new ideas, the most potent of which was Islam. By the ninth century A.D., Islam was an important part of the culture of the kingdoms.

Because of the wealth from the trans-Saharan trade, the societies of West Africa grew into highly sophisticated and centralised states, headed by a powerful King and

ministers.

Songhai's cabinet included the minister of the navy, the commander in chief of the army, minister of navigation and fishing, minister of taxation, minister in charge of property, minister of foreign affairs and minister of forestry.

Supporting the king was an army of enormous strength. To get an idea of this we could compare the army of Ghana with that of a French king of the time. When William the Conqueror attacked England in 1066 with an army of 4 000, Ghana could field an army of 200 000.

The kingdoms, too, had many well-designed and impressive towns. Perhaps the most famous of these was Timbuktu in Mali. Timbuktu was a thriving university centre with libraries, scholars and teachers who frequently went on lecture tours.

Arab travelers, like Ibn Muhammed, always praised the city in their writings. One roving reporter said, "Here you find many judges, doctors and professors, and other learned men, all handsomely

maintained by their king. Here, too, they sell many hand-written books, and more profit is made here from sale of books than from any other branch of trade."

Trade too thrived in these urban centers. In these towns merchants organised their international deals. Craftsmen made and sold their wares in the hustle and bustle of the market place. Tinkers tinkered, cobblers cobbled and tailors tailored. Timbuktu had twenty-six tailors, each having fifty to a hundred apprentices – an average of 200 tailors.

Over these sprawling kingdoms, ruled rich and powerful kings. So great was the wealth of one King, Mansa Musa of Mali, that he thought nothing of taking two thousand kilos of gold as presents on a diplomatic visit to Egypt.

We must not forget, of course, that all this wealth and power was based on the hard work of the African peasants in their fields, of the artisans who made clothes and pots and many other things, and of the traders and merchants who linked up one part of the empire with others or with distant lands.

TALL TIGER

Shocks the Orient

GIRAFFES usually keep their feet firmly on the ground.

But in 1415, one particular African giraffe undertook a lengthy and arduous voyage from his home in East Africa to the court of the Chinese emperor. (The Chinese, by the way, thought it was a vegetarian tiger). The giraffe was a gift from a rich East African kingdom.

The traders of East Africa had by this time been conducting a

brisk and lucrative trade for many centuries. From their ports they dealt with traders from China and other parts of Asia.

The African cities along the coast became rich and powerful. An Arab traveller described the famous trading city of Kilwa as “one of the most beautiful and well constructed towns in the world.”



Other coastal cities like Mogadishu, Malindi, Mombasa and others also flourished as centers of trade. These cities were all built of stone. Tall houses stood close together and were decorated with Persian rugs and Chinese porcelain.

In the town square, merchants, traders and diplomats from far-flung corners of the world gathered to gossip and transact. Kilwa contained a magnificent palace, many finely-constructed mosques and luxurious bathing pools.

The Arabs were the first traders to come to East Africa. They brought with them many Eastern treasures: Persian carpets, Chinese porcelain, glass and cotton of brilliant hues. In return, East Africans supplied foreign traders with tortoise-shell, animal horns and skins and more importantly ivory and gold.

Further inland other people prospered from East African trade. The Shona people, living in Zimbabwe, provided all the gold that the Asian traders bought so eagerly. This rich and powerful Shona kingdom bore the famous name Monomotapa. The people of Monomotapa built the great stone walls of Zimbabwe, a living testament still today of Africa's proud past.

Monomotapa and Kilwa maintained good diplomatic relations. Each respected the power and influence of the other.

Further north, kingdoms began to form in the places that are now, Zaire, Angola and Uganda. These people were farmers, with fine herds of cattle and good systems of irrigation which watered healthy and thriving harvests. These island kingdoms were also linked to the great trading network of the coastal kingdoms.

Africa before 1500 was indeed a continent of variety, wealth and knowledge.

The word “BANTU”

Symbol of oppression – symbol of solidarity

IN South Africa today, the word Bantu has become a swear word. Bantu Education, Bantustans, Bantu Affairs Commissioner – the word has indeed become part and parcel of apartheid structures in South Africa.

But there is, of course, no such thing as a “Bantu”. Language scientists use the word Bantu to refer to the great group of languages spoken almost throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Kenyans, Tanzanians, Mozambicans, South Africans and many others all speak one of the numerous Bantu languages.

The word also occurs in the Nguni languages. “Abantu” means “the human race”.



So while the word Bantu has become part of a vocabulary of division, the word, in its scientific sense and in other senses, can remind us of solidarity. For it links us here, on this isolated sub-continent to our brothers and sisters in the rest of the great continent of Africa, and with all of mankind.



The famous 'Bantu migrations'

IF you page through any contemporary text book of African history, you are bound to stumble across a short section entitled "The Bantu Migrations".

This little section will no doubt tell you that at some point in time (about two thousand years ago) numerous black 'tribes' set out from West Africa.

From here, they tramped across the forests and jungles and reassembled in the Congo. After a short stay, they took off once again.

A map will show you great black tentacles which are meant to indicate the separate paths taken by different "ethnic groups" into far-flung corners of the southern third of Africa.

Though this tale of the Greatest Trek On Earth, has undoubted dramatic appeal, it has little factual basis. The notion of a Zulu-speaking group in West Africa packing up their goods and chattels and marching non-stop down to Durban, is clearly absurd.

The so-called Bantu migrations, were no more than the slow and inevitable movement of a growing population in search of new lands for grazing and for crops.

MEET SOUTH AFRICA'S ORIGINAL SETTLERS

BEFORE Piet Retief, before the 1820 Settlers and before Van Riebeeck, Africa produced its own pioneers, its own unsung heroes.

They were ordinary men and women whose names and faces have not been recorded in history books. Many thousands of years ago, these people began a slow and gradual movement, from West Africa, that would over many centuries lead to the people of the southern third of the continent.

These early citizens of Africa would have been surprised to be called pioneers. They did not set out as a giant tourist party to cover vast distances at great speed. Rather, small groups, moving slowly and sporadically, came to settle throughout southern Africa.

A family moving fifty miles here and living for 20 years, then another group moving off possibly 20 miles away and settling again. Slow movement and settlement, short journeys possibly to the next valley. But together the effort of all these people overcame the task of inhabiting one of the world's largest continents.

Centuries before the birth of Christ, the total population of Africa was very small - possibly only three to four million (fewer than the number of people living on the Witwatersrand today.)

Very few people lived south of the equator. The only groups living in this area were Khoisan people, like the Pygmies of Central Africa and the San and Khoikhoi people (Bushmen and Hottentots) of South Africa.

All other Africans lived above the equator in North and West Africa.

But two major revolutions occurred amongst these northern Africans during this period. Agriculture became a major source of food. People began to mine, iron and make iron tools and weapons.

More food and better tools and weapons meant that people lived longer healthier and more secure lives. Population expanded rapidly. Land became scarce in certain areas, particularly in West Africa.

The people of West Africa found that they needed a lot of pasture for their cattle and new ground to plant their seeds. To find this land, they would have to move off and the only open

land lay to the south.

As these early farmers gradually moved south, they took their language with them. Their language according to historians, belonged to the great Bantu language family. As groups and families dispersed outwards, so their language became subject to new influences. For example, when Bantu speakers reached Southern Africa, they heard, for the first time, the click languages of the Khoisan people. Some groups of Bantu-speakers lived in close contact with the Khoisan. That is why Zulu and Xhosa have click sounds in them.

Similarly the Bantu speakers of East Africa learned many Arabic words from traders on the coast. Thus Swahili the major language of East Africa, contains many Arabic words, particularly trade and commercial words.

Over centuries, many different Bantu languages grew and developed. Modern Bantu languages bear little resemblance to one another. A Sotho-speaking South African would be quite unable to converse with Bantu speakers of West or East Africa. Today there are over 700 Bantu languages spoken in Africa.

Relics of an old culture

TRANSVAAL farmers seldom take an avid interest in archaeology.

But, in the early seventies, one farmer, Menno Klapwijk, did a little digging in his spare time on his farm "Silver Leaves". Little did he know that he was to make perhaps the most important archaeological and historical discovery in South Africa.

The bits of pottery and bones that he dug up may, to others, have seemed insignificant. But they were the relics of a very old settlements of black people.

"It became clear from his discovery that black people have been living in South Africa for at least 1600 years.

Yet most South African school text books would have us believe that blacks arrived in South Africa a good deal later.

Some early text books argue that blacks and whites arrived in South Africa at much the same time:

"It is still very uncertain from where the Bantu-speaking tribes of Africa came, but it is only about 300 to 400 years ago since they commenced to migrate to South Africa".

The most recent textbooks date the arrival of black people in South Africa somewhat earlier than this. But even these books are still a few centuries behind the times:

"It is not possible to say exactly when the great movement to Southern Africa began, but we know that the first of the Bantu crossed the Zambezi River round about 1100."

There is much archaeological evidence besides Mr Klapwijk's, to show that the first black people arrived here at least 1 600 years ago, and continued to move southward from other parts of Africa for the next 1 000 years.

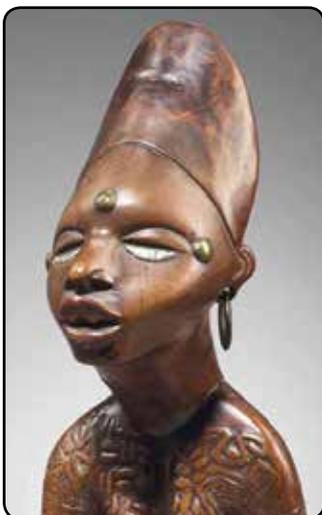
These early South Africans were hunters, herders and farmers. They knew how to mine and work with iron. The Highveld is dotted with remains of these early iron mines.

Southern Africa was not an uninhabited void at the time of the arrival of Bantu-speaking people. When the first Bantu-speaking groups arrived, they met great numbers of San and Khoikhoi people, who had already been living here for thousands of years.

AFRICAN ART GALLERY

As the Bantu-speakers slowly peopled the southern third of the continent, they took with them not only their language, but a rich cultural heritage - music, song, dance, oral literature, architecture and sculpture.

These carvings represent a cross-section of various styles and techniques used by Bantu-speaking societies.



The Bakongo people placed figures like this on graves of their ancestors



From the Congo, a wooden statuette of a female ancestor



A ceremonial statuette

An African world of **TRADE**

FOR hundreds of years before the Europeans came to Africa as colonial conquerors, Africa formed part of a massive international trading network. As neighboring people's, Africans, Asians and Europeans sailed the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean in small boats laden with goods for trade.

Contact between North Africa and Europe was as natural as contact between North Africa and West Africa. In fact, people found it easier to cross the Mediterranean Sea in boats or ships than to cross the Sahara desert on donkeys, horses or even camels. Southern Europe and North Africa each produced goods that the other needed. From Europe Africans bought metal goods such as swords, basins and jugs. They also bought special cloths made from silk and other materials.

Gold, ivory and other goods were brought to the North African sea ports across the Sahara desert from West Africa.

Alexandria in Egypt was the meeting point between Europe, Africa and Asia and became one of the greatest ports of the Middle Ages.

Egypt's most important exports were spices, brought from East Africa, India and from Indonesia. Spices were very important in those years when there were no refrigerators.

During the hot summers especially, spices were used to preserve food of all kinds, particularly meat. Spices such as pepper were therefore very expensive and the people who traded in spices made huge profits.



Africa meets world gold shortage

Africa approached AD 1400 in an important position at the centre of world trade. At a time when there was a worldwide shortage of gold, only Africa was able to meet this shortage. Two main regions provided gold: West Africa south of the Sudan traded in gold via the Berbers of the Sahara. And the area around Mwana Mutapa (near present day Zimbabwe) traded in gold with Swahili merchants on the East African coast.

For centuries the African gold supply had kept world trade going. With the spread of Islam many more trade routes were opened and business increased greatly.

1415 – A FATEFUL YEAR FOR AFRICA

THE year 1415 was a fateful one for Africa. This was the year during which the first African town came under the rule of a European power.



Portuguese conquest of Ceuta - 1415

And yet the years approaching 1415 were the ones in which Africa herself was a world power, central in exchange of goods, ideas, customs and people.

Much of the continent had become part of a world system of trade which had been built up by the Muslim traders. North, West and East Africa were valuable links in a chain of trade that was becoming the envy of European powers.

How was it then that Africa could be conquered by Europe?

As we shall see over the next few weeks, the European countries had been growing in strength.

Trade between the countries of Africa

WITHIN Africa itself trade between different African peoples was well-established long before the Europeans conquered the continent. In fact the trans-Saharan trade routes were so famous that one of the aims of the Portuguese voyages of ‘discovery’ was to find the source of this “golden trade of the Moors”!

By 1400 the countries of West Africa traded regularly with those on the North African coast and a complex network of trade routes and trunk roads linked up the two regions.

There was also regular, although less frequent, contact between West Africa and the countries of the Nile. The rulers of Ghana and Mali communicated with the rulers of Egypt and the kings of Kanem-Bornu received guns from as far as Turkey when the Turks ruled Egypt.

Basil Davidson describes the trans-African trade route in this way:

“This ancient route is still in use. Hundreds of Muslim pilgrims pass along it year by year walking from the northern shores of Lake Chad through the grasslands of Zaghawa to the hills of Darfur, entering the gap of Kebkebia beneath the mighty flanks of Jebel Marra, and thence going slowly onward through the waters of Kordofan until they reach the cities of the Nile. In olden times there was a steady trade along this route, linking Senegal at one end with the state of Somalia at the other.”

Along these trails traders (and armies) used animal transport as far as possible – mainly donkeys, horses and camels. But very often people carried the goods across

the rocky countryside or through the forests. Every village on the trail would provide carriers who helped the traders reach the next village. Wheeled vehicles were never used on these rough trails.

The interior of Africa, however, never had the paved roads of northern and eastern Africa. Large parts of the interior, especially South Africa, were isolated and did not have regular contact with the rest of the continent.



Market seller in Senegal. Six-hundred years ago a trans-African trade route linked Senegal in West Africa with Somalia in East Africa. Even today this ancient route is still in use: hundreds of Muslim pilgrims use it each year to get to Mecca.

SWAHILI was the language of coastal trading cities

THE famous Swahili language and some of Africa's most beautiful cities grew directly from the flourishing trade conducted between the people of East Africa and their neighbours who lived across the Indian Ocean.

For hundreds of years the people of Northeast and East Africa traded with the people of Arabia, Iran, India, Indonesia and even with Thailand and China. With the spread of Islam many of these people became Muslims and the trade increased even more.

Wealthy trading towns and cities were built by the people living on the East African coast: Mogadishu, Mombasa, Zanzibar, Kilwa, Mozambique and Sofala. These are some of the most beautiful towns in Africa even today, in spite of

the destruction which followed the colonial conquest.

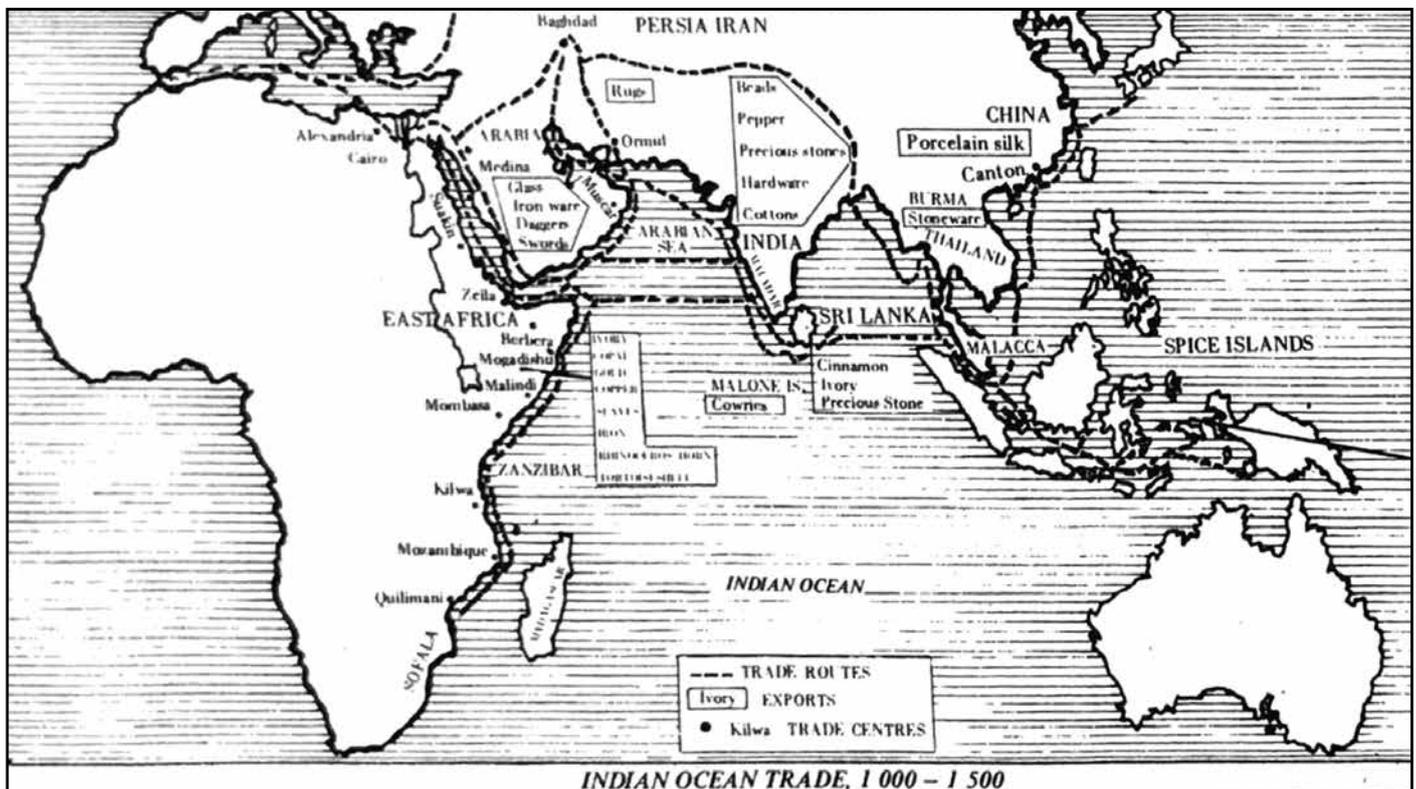
For centuries Arab merchants, particularly, traded with and settled in these towns. After many years a new language and culture came into being. This is the famous Swahili language. "Swahili" comes from an Arabic word meaning "coast".

Weakness

This flourishing culture, however, had one great weakness: it was

based on trade and not manufacture. Each city state competed with the others for goods and trading contacts; each jealously guarded its own trading interests.

As a result, the trading cities seldom managed to unite, even when there was a crisis: Loose alliances were sometimes formed, but they were never strong and never lasted very long. We shall see how disastrous this weakness became when the Portuguese, led by Vasco de Gama, sailed into the Indian Ocean in 1498.



EUROPE 'discovered' Africa in the 1400s when Portuguese and Spanish ships started sailing around the African coast.

But Africa did not have to be discovered! It had always been there. It was only European ignorance that turned these voyages of exploration into voyages of 'discovery'.

For Africa its 'discovery' by Europe was a curse. Although the European voyages of exploration began to unify the world through trade and cultural exchange, the first three centuries were a time of suffering for Africa.

The most unforgettable legacy of this 'discovery' remains the slave trade.

Everything else becomes unimportant when we compare it with this rape of Africa.

Capitalist agriculture, mining, industry and the missionaries also changed the ways of life of the people of Africa.

Whatever one might say, it is clear that the relationship between European and Africa has been one of the most painful and difficult relationships among the different peoples of the world.



A Portuguese soldier armed with a gun – this bronze figure was made in Benin in the 1600s. The Portuguese were one of the first European nations to “discover” Africa. In time they came to trade guns for slaves, an exchange which was to have disastrous consequences for Africa.

How Europe 'found' Africa

IN MOST South African history classes the European “voyages of discovery” are treated as the beginning of Africa’s history. As we now know this is nonsense!

For thousands of years before these voyages, Africa had an ongoing relationship with Europe as well as with many other parts of the world. What we need to understand is what Africa’s relationship with Europe was like during the 1400s when the voyages of exploration took place.

During the 700 years before the voyages started, Islam had spread rapidly to the East, across North Africa and into Europe itself. In Spain and in parts of Portugal the Muslims had gained control of trade and learning.

Many Christians in Spain and Portugal were opposed to this Muslim monopoly and over the years hostility between the two groups grew. The landowning and trading families of Spain and

Portugal never tired of trying to push the “Moors” out of these countries and many wars were fought.

Both Christians and Muslims saw these as religious wars. The Christians called them ‘crusades’. The Muslims called them ‘jihad’ (holy wars). But in fact the wars were being fought over trade and power.

By 1400 the Christians in Spain and Portugal succeeded in defeating the Muslims, but Portugal was not content to leave the matter there. In 1415 an army set out for North Africa and captured Ceuta, a port on the Moroccan coast. In doing so, the Portuguese reversed for the first time in 700 years the northward direction of conquest across the Mediterranean.

The conquest of Ceuta was an event of grave importance. It was the first African territory of modern times to be ruled by Europeans.

From the point of view of the Portuguese, Ceuta was an invaluable conquest: as long as they controlled the port, they could prevent any African power from invading Portugal from the sea. Furthermore, Ceuta was one of the end points of the trans-Saharan gold trade. To get direct contact with Africa’s gold producing countries was one of the aims of all European rulers.

It was in the search for gold that the voyages of ‘discovery’ played such an important role. After the capture of Ceuta, the Portuguese sent out regular expeditions by sea to explore the West African coast.

They hoped to get directly to the source of gold and ivory in the Niger valley.

By 1441 the efforts of the explorers began to bear fruit. In that year the first gold that had been bartered directly with the coastal people of West Africa was brought back to Europe.

This was the start of a trade relationship from which for a very short time, Africa would benefit, but which in the long run doomed the continent to foreign exploration.



Above: New arrivals in Europe... These African captives are lined up before a buyer and watch apprehensively as their fate is determined.

Below: King Affonso of the Congo... it was he who eventually refused to supply the Portuguese with slaves. Here he speaks to a Portuguese envoy during friendlier times, and asks for missionaries and holy objects.

King Affonso takes a stand on the slave question

IN the year 1441 a small ship set out from West Africa on its return journey to Portugal. This ship was about to make history for on board was the first cargo exported directly from Africa to Europe: gold and slaves.

So began the trade which would impoverish Africa and bring the continent under the yoke of foreign domination.

At first there was a certain measure of equality between the African peoples and the European traders. The trade in gold, ivory and spices from Africa and cloths and metal goods from Europe benefited both sides.

As the Portuguese seamen crept down the coast of Africa they established strong links with some of the peoples on the coast. One such partnership was established with King Affonso (Nzinga Memba) of Congo.

A relationship of real respect and of mutual advantage grew up between this king and the Portuguese. Ambassadors were exchanged and there was a constant coming and going.

But soon things began to get out of control. The Portuguese merchants wanted to get rich quickly and next to gold, slaves were the most valuable merchandise.

Within five years of that small ship returning to Portugal with its human cargo, 1000 slaves were transported to Europe. These people were either captured directly by European slave hunters or else bought from African



Chiefs on the West African coast.

The trade in slaves became one of the main reasons for further exploration of the coast of Africa. But in time it also destroyed the good relationship between King Affonso and Portugal.

The Portuguese demanded more and more slaves whom they transported across the Atlantic Ocean to work on their plantations in Brazil. (Brazil had also been “discovered” and conquered by the Portuguese).

By 1526 the situation had become so bad that King Affonso wrote to the King of Portugal as follows:

“We cannot reckon how great a damage your merchants are doing. Every day they seize upon our people, and even on the sons of some of my Chiefs and my own relatives. So great is the corruption and immorality of all that my country is becoming depopulated.”

He wrote that he had decided “that in these my kingdoms (of Congo) there should not be any trade in slaves nor any trading outlet for slaves”.

What he did not know was that it was already too late.

PORTUGUESE INVASION

THE first Portuguese ships to sail into the Indian Ocean were heading for the famous Spice Islands of the East Indies. But they struck gold long before they got there: they “discovered” the rich East African trade, and within a matter of years destroyed it.

For centuries East Africa had been the main source of gold for Asia and Arabia. East African ivory was very highly valued in India and China.

Of all this the Portuguese were completely ignorant. Rounding the Cape, Vasco De Gama “discovered” Mozambique and the wealthy trading cities of Mombasa, Quilimane and Malindi. Initial wonder at the prosperity of these cities soon turned to greed: almost at once the Portuguese began to loot and burn. They broke into city after city, stealing and destroying as they went.

Da Gama was the first, but he was soon followed by other Portuguese captains: men such as Cabral and D’Almeida. A sailor on D’Almeida’s voyage left us the following description of what happened when they reached Mombasa:

“D’Almeida ordered that the town should be sacked and that each man should carry off to his ship whatever he found: so that at the end there would be division of the spoil, each man to receive a twentieth of what he had found. The same rule was made for gold, silver and pearls.

“Then everyone started to plunder the town and to search the houses, forcing open the doors with axes and iron bars. There was a large quantity of cotton cloth for Sofala in the town, for the whole coast gets its cotton cloth from here. So the admiral got a good share of the trade of Sofala for himself.

“A large quantity of rich silk and gold embroidered clothesline were seized, and carpets also; one of these without equal for its beauty, was sent to the King of Portugal together with many other valuables.”

There are many descriptions of this kind of behaviour. Some towns on the coast were emptied as the unsuspecting people fled into the interior.

The final result of the Portuguese invasion was the destruction of the age-old Indian Ocean trade between East Africa and Western Asia. The trade between the



Vasco De Gama sailed into the Indian Ocean at the end of the 1400s and led the attack against the trading cities of East Africa.

interior of Africa and the coast was interrupted, or simply dried up.

The Portuguese did their best to stop any sea traffic that did not take place under the flag of the king of Portugal, but in the end it was England and Holland that cornered the Old Indian Ocean trade.

Portugal was too poor to replace the hundreds and thousands of Indian, Arabian and African ships that used to trade in the Indian Ocean. The richer Dutch and English gradually defeated the Portuguese, until they only had a few ports in India and in Africa.

This was the situation until the end of the 1800s when a new wave of imperialist annexation of African (and other) territories began.



SLAVERY

History's GREATEST crime

THE Atlantic slave trade in Africa has been called the greatest crime in world history. Four hundred years of inhumanity saw the deaths of millions of people as a result of this brutal trade.

The effects of the slave trade are still with us today. The presence of large numbers of people of African origin in America and Asia; the supposed “backwardness” of Africa; the silly belief that Africans are “inferior” to other human beings – all these are results of the African slave trade.

What is slavery? Why are people enslaved by others?

Property

A slave is a human being who is the property of another: Slaves, like animals, are completely at the mercy of their owners and can be made to do anything that their owners want them to do.

Of course, the owners of the slaves will usually try to keep their slaves alive as long as possible, but at times they may force them to work harder than they should. Then the death rate among the slaves will be very high.

Being human, slaves have always opposed their condition and there have been many slave revolts in history. Few have been successful because masters never allow their slaves to get possession of weapons. Also, slaves are usually sent very far away from their homes and are cut off from any help.

Worldwide

Slavery has been practiced in most parts of the world. The basic reason for the enslavement of people is the need for labour.

Whenever there is an extreme shortage of labour rulers will use some method or other to force people to work. Slavery is the extreme form of such forced labour. Migrant labour and contract labour, under certain circumstances, are also forms of forced labour.

History records two main forms of slavery:

- **DOMESTIC SLAVERY**, sometimes practiced in parts of Africa before the coming of the Arabs and the Europeans.

Domestic slaves were usually people of the community who could not pay their debts or people who were punished for crimes against the community. They were rarely treated badly and could easily get back their freedom.

- **GANG SLAVERY**, the forced employment of large numbers of people in agriculture, building or industry. In Africa gang slavery was never practiced except in Egypt at the time the pyramids were built.

Gang slaves were usually captured in wars and were forced to work or were sold to people who needed slaves to work.



Slave chains found in Africa by David Livingstone. In its inhumanity the Atlantic slave trade compares with the American Government's use of the Atomic Bomb against innocent Japanese men, women and children in 1945. In its criminal barbarism it compares with the Nazi killing of more than six million Europeans simply because they were “Jews”.



The Atlantic slave trade

THE Atlantic slave trade was one of the most important events in world history: it began in 1441 and lasted for 400 years. It grew to involve millions of people and was one of the main reasons for the development of the capitalist system as we know it today.

Starting under the Portuguese, the Atlantic slave trade at first operated on a small scale. In fact it was no different from the Arab slave trade which had been going on for so many years before.

But two events changed the European slave trade from something that was similar to the Arab slave trade into something that was completely different:

- The ‘discovery’ of the Americas
- The development and large scale industrial production in Europe.

America

The Spanish were the first Europeans to reach the Americas. They found two things: silver (and some gold) in South America; the possibility of growing crops in central and north America.

Mining and farming both demanded labour. At first the Spaniards (and the Portuguese) enslaved the American Indians and later imported European slaves to work the plantations. But thousands of these people died under the difficult working conditions.

In the end it was found that the African people were the most productive: skilled in both mining and farming, they worked much better than the other people who had been enslaved. They were also used to the tropical weather conditions and thus lived much longer than the others did.

And so the demand for African slaves increased over the years. Millions of African people were shipped to the American plantations - and this was to be the case for 300 years.

Europe

In the meantime the different European nations were competing with each other for control of the sugar and tobacco producing areas of America. In Europe there was a huge demand for both these products.

The production of these crops required much labour and thus the so-called “Triangular Trade” was set up across the Atlantic between Europe, Africa and America:

European merchants would buy slaves from Africa in exchange for European goods. From Africa they would transport them to America.



THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE - A TRIANGLE

- * From Africa to the Americas - Slaves to work the plantations.
- * From America to Europe - sugar, cotton, tobacco.
- * From Europe to Africa - guns, cheap goods in exchange of slaves.

There they would sell the slaves in return for sugar, tobacco and cotton. The merchants would then return to Europe where they would make huge profits on these goods.

Africa

How did the African people come to be enslaved?

In most cases the European slave traders were not directly involved in the actual capture of the slaves. On the West African coast they traded with African chiefs who would provide the slaves in exchange for goods such as cheap cloth, tobacco and sugar which had been brought from Europe.

At first most of the slaves exchanged for European goods had already been domestic slaves who had been sold to another village or to the peoples on the coast.

But as the demand for slaves increased, more and more of the slaves came to be people who had been captured in war.

In other words, the slave trade led to destructive wars among the African village communities and peoples. Guns became an important item of trade and a vicious circle

was set up: The African chiefs would exchange slaves for guns only in order to capture more slaves in order to obtain more guns.

And yet which African chief could refuse to supply slaves? All knew that the Europeans would simply go further down the coast. And that would mean no longer being able to buy European goods, especially the guns which were becoming more and more necessary for survival.

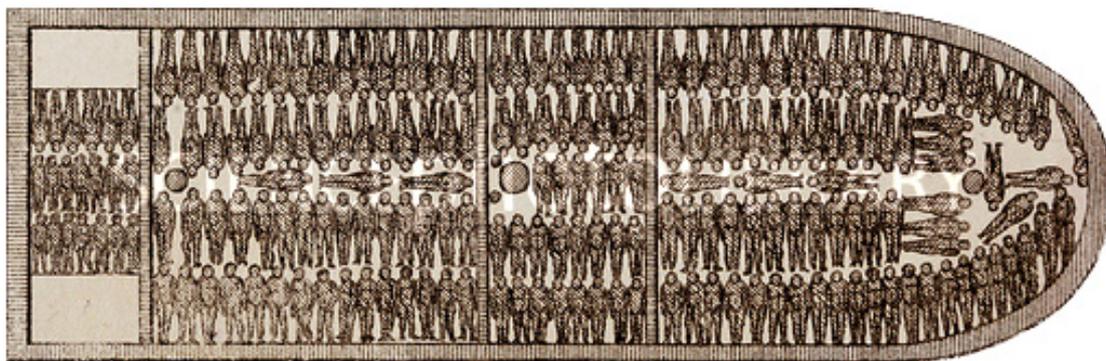
So the slave trade can be explained by three things:

- The Europeans' need for labour to work their plantations in America.
- The Africans' need for the goods manufactured in Europe.
- The disunity and weakness of the African societies.

How many?

A British historian, Sir Reginald Coupland, tried to estimate how many men, women and children were sent to America: He said that as many as 40 million African people were taken as slaves.

Thousands of slaves died on their way from the interior of Africa to the coast. Millions died on the sea voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. Just how many died we shall never know.



A diagram showing how a 19th century slave ship would load the maximum number of human beings.

Slave trade across the Indian Ocean

SLAVERY had been going on in the entire Mediterranean world long before the massive slave trade started across the Atlantic Ocean. There were, however, important differences between the two trades.

Before the rise of Islam people had been captured and enslaved in East Africa, but the numbers of these slaves were never very great. Most of them were taken to Arabia, Iran and India.

With the spread of Islam many cities on the East African coast became Muslim. As a result the slave traders, who by this time were mostly Muslims themselves, had to concentrate on capturing slaves in the interior of Africa. This was because Islam forbids the enslavement of fellow Muslims.

For more than 1 000 years, even into the present century, a few thousand Africans were transported each year as slaves from East Africa to Asia and even to China. For a long time Muslim slave traders also bought Christian European slaves in the famous Italian seaports such as Venice and Genoa.

Many of these slaves were needed to do domestic

work for their masters, but many more had to work on the spice plantations. At times they also did other agricultural work.

There was one big difference between the Arab Slave trade and the European-dominated Atlantic slave trade which started so many years later. The Arab slave trade never became as large or as destructive as the Atlantic slave trade.

The reason for this is that before the 18th century, no country in the world was industrialised - there was no large-scale production of goods by machines. As a result there was no great need for extra labour to produce vast amounts of raw materials; most countries could produce enough raw materials for production by hand.

It was only once countries became industrialised and went into large-scale production that extra labour was needed to produce tobacco, cotton, etc, for the factories. And it was at this point that slavery grew to massive proportions in the Atlantic slave trade.

Since Asia did not develop such large-scale production until after it had been conquered by Europeans, the Arab slave trade never became anywhere as large and as destructive as the Atlantic slave trade.

The end of SLAVERY

The Atlantic slave trade ended only 100 years ago. Having started in 1441 with Africa and Europe trading as equals, it ended with Europe having been enriched and strengthened at Africa's expense.

The slave trade was a typical colonial trade. It was a system whereby Africa was forced to export its most valuable product (labour power) in exchange for goods that did not help to produce anything in Africa.

Goods such as guns, cloth, beads and metal pots were used up quickly. They did not enrich Africa. They did not help Africa to enrich herself.

On the other hand the slaves who went to America were forced to produce silver, sugar, cotton and tobacco. These products fed the fast growing European factories. They also enabled the American planters and their European colonial masters to make huge profits.

This unequal trade meant that Europe was growing stronger while Africa was being weakened. In particular the wealthy class of

Europe were gaining at the expense of the ordinary people of Africa – those who were not Chiefs or rich merchants.

It was Europe's gain that prolonged the slave trade. No matter what suffering it caused, too many rulers and investors were making profits to stop it.

Eventually the British, who for long had been amongst the worst slavers of all, began to oppose the slave trade. From 1807 they introduced special ships (naval patrols). These patrols could stop any ship which was carrying slaves and could free its human cargo. Other countries gradually followed Britain's example, but in some cases official slavery ended only in 1888.

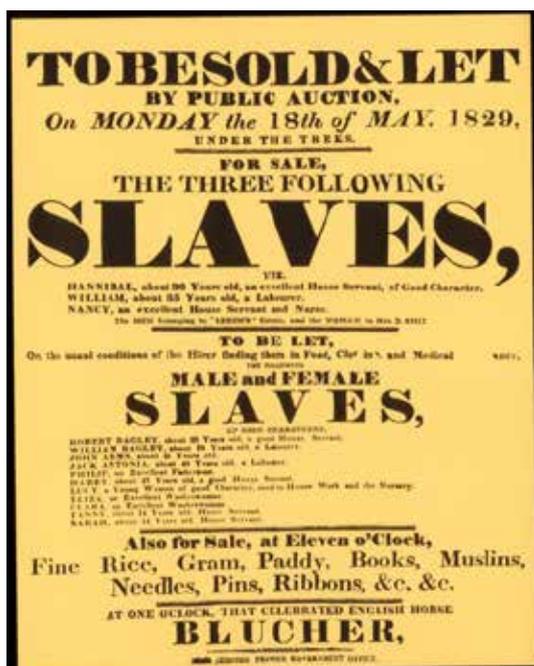
There were many reasons why slavery came to a halt at this stage, and why Britain took the lead in ending it. The main reason was that

slavery had become expensive.

Britain's plantations in the West Indies no longer suffered from a shortage of labour. And when there is enough labour it is always more expensive for a boss to have slaves than to pay wages to workers.

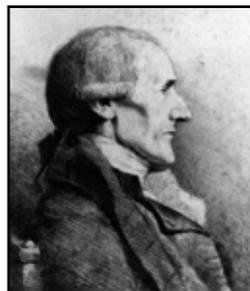
A boss has to keep slaves alive by feeding them, clothing and housing them. He has to do this even when there is no work or not very much work. If bosses pay wages, they no longer have to provide for the workers who are unemployed or underemployed.

Another reason for the abolition of the slave trade was the strong growth of the missionary movement in Europe, especially in England. The missionary movement and its friends began to make strong propaganda and soon people all over England were asking whether this trade was correct or necessary.



A slave sale bill from 1829.

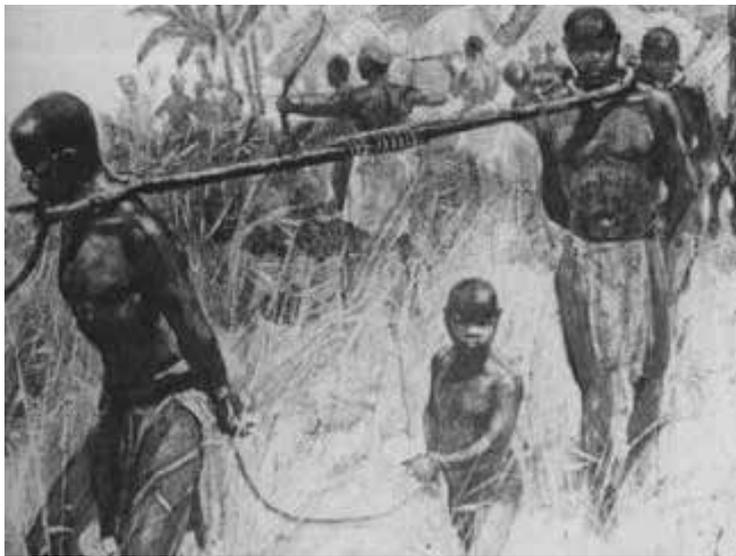
The abolitionists



GRANVILLE Sharp was one of the British liberals who, together with William Wilberforce, succeeded in arousing the conscience of the British people to stop the slave trade in 1807. There were many economic reasons why the abolitionist movement succeeded only in 1807 and not before.



PIERRE-DOMINIQUE Toussaint L'Ouverture, a slave leader who led the fight for liberty in the French sugar colony of Saint Dominique, later called Haiti. Inspired partly by the French Revolution, this slave revolt took place during and after 1789 and was the largest of all the uprisings in the Americas.



The Chiefs were robbed while the people lost their freedom

IN the exchange of human beings for European manufactured goods the Africans were often cheated, as Rev John Newton explains below. Newton was an Englishman who had been a slave trader before entering the church. He later became one of the more outspoken opponents of slavery.

“**I**n every possible way the Africans are cheated whether in the number, weight, measure or quality of what they buy. And the European traders have become very skillful in these practices.

Liquor is diluted with water. Kegs of gunpowder are weighed down so that large kegs contain no more powder than the smaller ones. Linen and cotton cloths of three yards are opened and two cut off – not from the end, but from the middle where it is not so easily noticed.

And so the Africans, in turn, have become jealous, cunning and revengeful as their trade with the Europeans has increased – particularly their trade with the English, I am sorry to say. They know with whom they have to deal, and they are accordingly prepared.

They retaliate and we in turn take reprisals. Often trade is eventually suspended, all discussion is stopped and things are in a state of war. But then necessity forces either the ship or them to make peace and a price is determined.

With few exceptions the English and the Africans regard each other as arch-villains, who are always on the lookout for opportunities to do mischief. I’m afraid we have, and probably deserve, a very bad reputation on the coast.

When I have wrongly accused a black of unfairness and dishonesty, he has answered with an air of disdain : ‘What! Do you think I am a white man?’” ... (Adapted from “thoughts upon African Slave Trade”.)

The origins of ‘slave’

ALTHOUGH most of the people who have been enslaved in the history of the world have come from Africa, the word “slave” itself comes from Europe.

This is because many of the European people who were enslaved came from the northern and eastern coasts of the Black Sea. Most of the people in these parts speak Slavic language (such as Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian) and the word “Slav” has been adopted by most European languages to describe a person who has been enslaved.

The Arabic word for a piece of property is “mamluk” and at first all Egyptian slaves were called mamluks. But later on this word was used only to describe certain slaves who in fact became rulers.

These were young boys from Christian countries who were bought by Turkish traders in the slave markets of the Black Sea.

Many of these boys were given a Muslim education. Once they had become Muslims they could become free again. Many were trained to become governors of provinces in the Turkish Empire – such as Egypt.

The Big Scramble for AFRICA

THE scramble for Africa started in 1875 and with it the continent was colonised – nor for its own benefit, but for the benefit of the wealthy and powerful people of Europe.

Before 1870, Europeans had shown very little interest in Africa apart from the trade of slaves. Trade between North Africa and Europe had continued in a limited way. Britain had occupied the Cape because of its important naval position on the route to India, and not because it was considered an important colony.

In fact, between 1815 and 1875 the Europeans had little interest in having new colonies in other parts of the world. This was the result of the success of the American War of Independence against England in 1783. The same kind of struggle was successful in South America where all the colonies of Spain revolted and got their Independence by 1830.

But suddenly the European powers began to compete with one another to annex new colonies wherever possible. Most of these colonies were in Africa. There were very many reasons for this sudden change. People who have studied this have very different ideas about what these reasons were.

The conquest and annexation of Africa by Europe can only be understood as part of an international struggle between the great powers of Europe, especially Britain, France and Germany. This struggle was not only (and not even mainly) concerned with Africa.

The factory owners and the traders of the different European nations needed raw materials (such as cotton, wool, tobacco and sugar) for their machines. Their own countries could no longer produce enough of these raw materials to keep their machines moving. So they had to find them elsewhere.

Also, they needed markets in which to sell the goods they had produced (for example, clothing, tinned foods, refined sugar, etc). Their own populations could not buy all the goods because usually the majority of the people (the workers) were too poor. So they had to try sell their goods in other parts of the world.



French army officers during their “pacification” of Morocco about 1910.



The European bankers and people with money and property also wanted to invest their capital in places where they could make a big profit. It was often difficult for them to get big profits in the existing industries in Europe at the time.

So for further capitalist development the various European nations had to conquer and divide up the world. The scramble for Africa was the result of this need in Europe.

COLONIAL DESTRUCTION OF AFRICA

COLONIALISM was a shattering experience for Africa. In many places it destroyed old ways of life and brought changes which were only for the benefit of the colonial rulers.

Basically the colonial system had two aims: to bring cheap raw materials into the European factories and to sell the products made in those factories.

As a result, mines were dug in the colonies. Plantations were made and farmed. In time Africa was exporting minerals and many other products such as rubber, cotton, coffee and cocoa.

Of course, no factories were started in Africa, except for a few here in South Africa. With factories in Africa there would have been no need to send raw materials to Europe or to buy European manufactured products. This would have defeated the aims of the colonial rulers.

Wealthy people in Europe got richer while most of the people of Africa got poorer. Wealth (in the form of raw materials) was taken out of Africa, but nothing was put into the continent which could make it strong and able to produce even the simplest goods.

As a result, Africa remained dependent on European goods for many years. In fact, long after World War II Africa still had to get almost all its manufactured products from Europe.

In most cases Africans were not eager to work for the Europeans – for many years they had produced enough food and clothing for themselves.

But the colonial rulers had to find labour to work the mines and plantations. So they forced people to work. In the Portuguese colonies and in Congo, they forced people to work almost like slaves.

In other cases (as in the British colonies) they taxed the people in money so that the men had to go work in the mines and on the plantations. This was the only way they could earn money to pay the tax.

There was another reason why life changed drastically for some of the peoples of Africa. In those colonies (such as South Africa and Rhodesia) where there were



The shattering effects of colonialism were felt by all the people of Africa. In some cases a look at the position of women demonstrates most clearly how the colonial system was put into practice. Inside today Africa Series features three cases of women under colonialism.

many white settlers, the African people were simply robbed of their land.

Wars were fought for the land occupied by the African people. Most times the Africans were defeated and were then forced to live in reserves.

In South Africa these reserves are now insultingly called “homelands”. In Rhodesia they were called “Tribal Trust Lands” before the Patriotic Front came to power.

Resistance

But the colonial system also brought about changes which were eventually to lead to its destruction. New classes of people came into being: preachers, teachers, clerks, shopkeepers, cash-crop farmers, workers.

They began to criticise the European powers. They accused them of exploiting the African countries without doing anything of lasting value in them.

Soon this criticism would become organised into protest movements for reform. World War II would change these movements into movements for independence from the colonial powers.

British rulers face NIGERIAN WOMEN

When the British took over Nigeria, they treated the Nigerian women in the same way they treated their own women: fit only for housework. But the Igbo women in Nigeria had traditionally been very active in the politics of their communities and they fiercely resisted the changes colonialism was bringing about. The Igbo of Nigeria were one of the few people among whom women played an active political role before the arrival of colonialism. Although many nations gave queens special status, the Igbo had special organisations and leadership posts for women in every village.

The British colonial administration did not recognise this system. They replaced all the customs with institutions run by men only. This provoked the women to respond with great fury.

Traditionally each village had two rulers: one was a man and the other a woman. The man was called the obi and he dealt with matters that mostly concerned other men. The woman was called the omu. She was considered the “mother of the village” and ruled on all matters concerning women. Both leaders had a cabinet of advisors who helped to tell people of the decisions that were made.

The most important functions of the omu was to see that the markets ran smoothly. Markets were held every four days and were entirely women’s affairs. Women could make good profits from their trading in the markets.

The omu set the prices in the markets and had her own policewomen to see that all the rules and regulations were obeyed. She was also a judge, hearing cases that women brought to her about problem with their husbands or families.

Besides the omu there were other women’s organisations. There

was a special women’s council with representatives from every neighbourhood. There was an organisation for all daughters of the town and one for all the women who had married sons in the town.

Very important decisions concerning the entire community were discussed in large public meetings. Both men and women were allowed to speak at these meetings.

If the women agreed that a man had acted badly towards his wife, or had broken the women’s market rules, they punished him by exposing his faults. This method was called “sitting on a man”. All the women would surround the man’s house. They would sing songs about his bad behaviour. If he didn’t confess and agree to make up for his actions, they might tear his house down.

When the British arrived in Nigeria they set up their own courts. Although they paid the obi a monthly salary for his duties, they took away the authority of the omu. The British rulers believed that women were not fit to take part in business, science or politics.

The British also made some of the Igbo men special Warrant Chiefs. Their job was to carry out all the orders given by the colonial authorities. Some of the Warrant

Chiefs forced women to marry them against their will. They also stole food from the women’s market. This made the women very angry.

In 1929 the “women’s war” started as a result of all these difficulties. All the women met secretly through their market organisation and agreed on what action to take.

Then thousands of women marched to the Native Administration centres and demanded that the Warrant Chiefs be removed. They chanted, danced and sang songs of ridicule, as if they were sitting on a man.

Sixteen Native Courts were attacked and burnt down. Prisons were broken into and all the prisoners set free. The authorities sent in policemen who shot and killed over 50 women, injuring many others.

Although most of the Warrant Chiefs were replaced, the British authorities still did not recognise the traditional women’s institutions. All the decision-making and administrative jobs were still given only to men.

It is only today, after independence, that the position of the omu is returning to Nigeria and the women can once again feel that they have a voice in the life of the community.

African women stripped of traditional roles

UNDER colonial rule women's traditional role in agriculture suffered greatly. The Luo people in western Kenya are one example of how the changes affected women.

Before colonialism both men and women did agricultural work. It was the women's responsibility to raise enough food to feed her family. Land was plentiful and the only limit to getting wealthy was the number of people in one family to help with the farm work.

In 1899 the British imposed their rule over Luo country. They appointed their own "Chiefs" to collect a hut tax. At first the Luo sold their livestock to get the cash for taxes. But when these were used up, the men had to leave their families to work for the Europeans as migrant labourers.

With so many men away working for the Europeans, the women had to do all the farming by themselves. Often the husbands or brothers were paid so little in wages that they could not send cash home. Often the women had to send food to them.

Besides having to do more work, it became harder for women to make any profits from farming. The British limited the amount of land that the Luo could use for farms and the soil became overused.

The British also abolished the local markets where women had previously done their trading. Only Indians

were allowed to buy products from Africans or sell to them manufactured goods. And then, in the 1930's, Kenya suffered from severe drought and an invasion of locusts.

All this made farming very difficult. In order to make a living at all, the women had to make many changes. With whatever cash they could get, they bought iron hoes instead of wooden ones. They bought grinding mills and sometimes ox-drawn ploughs. The old crop of sorghum was replaced by maize so they could get two crops a year instead of one.

With all these changes women managed to increase the amount of food produced. But then they found that they could no longer simply trade food for other things. Cash was needed for most things.

Once the British had arrived, the missionaries influenced people to want things that could only be bought with money, not from trading. Besides hoes and ploughs, the Luo wanted more imported clothing, European type foods and household goods.

Education seemed the best way of being able to earn more money. But it required money to send children to school. Very few women were sent to mission schools and there were hardly any paying jobs for them. So the goal in life for many women became saving money to send their sons to school.

Since farming produced so little cash, many women began developing crafts such as making baskets or pottery to sell to the Europeans. Women found that their traditional role as agriculturists no longer helped their families as much as it had before. In the new colonial society there was very little they could do to improve their lives.

Resistance to colonialism

FROM Tanzania comes yet another example of resistance to the workings of colonialism.

As in many other colonies, the British colonial administration in Tanzania ruled through Chiefs whom they themselves had appointed. These Chiefs instituted a new tax and in 1945 thousands of men in the Pare District marched to the colonial headquarters in protest.

Nothing was done about the tax, even when the protests carried on for months.

Eventually the women marched to the headquarters in support of their fathers, husbands and brothers.

They told the District Officer he should make them all pregnant since all their men were being kept away from home because of the resistance against this tax.

From then on, government representatives could not drive through the district without having their cars stoned by angry crowds of women. In a very short space of time the tax was dropped.



MISSIONARIES IN AFRICA

Spreading the Gospel

MISSIONARIES have played a very important part in Africa's history.

Large numbers of missionaries came to Africa in the 1800s. Most of the early arrivals were British who intended only to spread Christianity. Many missionaries were in fact helping colonial conquest to come about.

Some of the very first missionaries in Africa travelled with expeditions of explorers from Portugal in the 15th century. They came to the west coast of Africa, to Guinea, the Congo and Angola, and to the islands of the coast. Trading settlements were thus established.

At this time Portugal was a very powerful country. She intended to spread Christianity all over the world. But Portugal itself only had a small population, so only small numbers of men were sent out as missionaries, for long periods. Many died of tropical diseases. They received no financial help from Portugal and often turned to slave-trading to keep going.

As Portuguese power in Europe declined, fewer and fewer missionaries arrived. By 1700 there was no trace of Christianity along the west coast except ruined churches.

The slave trade increased and it was a long time before missionaries appeared in Africa again.

Towards the end of the 1700s there was a widespread revival of religious feeling in Europe. This was particularly so in England.

The growth of industries had sharply divided the people of England into rich and poor. More and more people started working in factories and many lived in slums. In their misery the poor people turned to the church.

This statuette of a missionary and his converts was done by an African in the Congo. Note how much larger the missionary is - this was to show his power and importance.



Some educated sons and daughters of the rich took pity on the poor. They became lay preachers and social workers and went into the townships where the poor people lived. There they preached a gospel of hope and happiness in the next world and tried to keep the people from desperate acts of violence.

Soon hundreds of societies were formed to spread the gospel of Christ. In time, people began to feel that this same gospel could and should be preached to other parts of the world. Europeans in those days generally believed that other peoples (especially Africans) had not yet had the benefit of the light of the gospel and needed to be saved.

From about 1790 hundreds, and later thousands of young European men and women went to the furthest corners of the earth as missionaries. A very large number of them came to Africa.

Missionaries in Sudan

DURING the late 1800s, missionary activity in Sudan seems to have been dominated by infighting among the missionaries themselves. Nevertheless the missionaries did achieve some good work in the Sudan – they established hundreds of schools.

In the late 1800s there were Catholic missionaries in the South Sudan. They suffered heavy loss due to disease and lack of money and all the missions had closed by 1851.

Soon the Mahdi's rebellion removed all traces of Christianity. The few Catholic nuns and priests left were taken prisoner and General Gordon was killed by the Mahdists in 1885.

The British Protestants decided to start missionary work in the Sudan in Gordon's memory as soon as possible.

Their chance came in 1898 when Kitchener's Anglo-Egyptian forces defeated the Mahdists. The Sudan was then governed by the British under Lord Cromer.

Cromer's strategy

The Northern part of Sudan was Muslim. Cromer refused to allow the missionaries to practice in the North but was keen for them to work in the South. He wanted them to build up a counter strength against the Muslim north. The British administration in Sudan also supported missionary activity because the missionaries were willing to provide education at no cost. The Government badly needed skilled clerks and artisans but did not have enough money to provide schools and teachers in the South.

The Catholics, Anglicans and Presbyterians all sent missionaries to South Sudan. To avoid conflict between them Lord Cromer outlined areas where each denomination could operate. The Catholics were always against this system because they felt they could convert the whole region to Catholicism if there was free competition – they seemed to aim for huge numbers of converts. There was a great deal of competition between the Catholics and Anglicans.

The Presbyterians, however, did not involve themselves in these fights. The Presbyterians were American missionaries who first arrived in 1902. For 60 years these missionaries provided excellent medical treatment, ran a hospital, and offered a very high standard of education.

In 1953 Sudan achieved self-government South Sudan soon became shaken by a series of disturbances, mutinies and rebellions leading to the expulsion of all foreign missionaries in 1964.

MISSION PLACES DESTROYED

MANY Chiefs believed that the missionaries were plotting with the traders and politicians to overthrow African rule and occupy their states.

In 1867 the Igbo people looted mission stations, destroyed libraries and expelled the missionaries. In 1869 the Asante army destroyed mission stations and imprisoned the missionaries.

The missionaries began to encourage military intervention. An American

Baptist missionary remarked: "War is often the means of opening a door for the gospel to enter a country. A sword of steel often goes before a sword of the spirit."

And when the British finally conquered Nigeria, a politician commented: 'In fact the Church Missionary Society, for good or for ill, has done more to create British Nigeria than the British government.'

At first the Asante of Ghana refused to support the mission stations. They

regarded them as political outposts of the British Government. But in 1900 the Asante fought the British for the last time. They wrecked mission stations and churches but were defeated in the end. During the battle one of the missionaries encouraged the British to seize the "Golden Stool". This was the symbol of Asante spirit, solidarity and nation. At a church service to commemorate the British victory the minister thanked God for the stool and for preserving the prestige of the British Empire.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE MISSIONARIES

THE first missionaries to arrive in West Africa during the 1800s were from the British Church Missionary Society (CMS). They started their work in Sierra Leone.

Black settlers from the ex-slave areas of America also came to Sierra Leone and the town of Freetown was set up. These people were already Christians and they continued to worship under lay preachers.

Within 50 years of the founding of Freetown, Christian congregations were to be found in many coastal towns in Gambia, the Gold Coast, Dahomey and Nigeria. Those were started by African converts moving outwards from Freetown and by missionaries moving in from Europe and America.

In 1827 the CMS started the Fourah Bay Institute in Freetown – a school for the education of promising pupils. One of the first boys at the school was an African, Samuel Ajayi Crowther. He became an outstanding student of West African languages, and translated part of the Bible into Yoruba. Later he became Bishop of Niger.

Another notable missionary was Bowen who went to Nigeria from

America in 1849. He explored Nigeria, took a keen interest in the Yoruba people and studied their language. He wrote a Yoruba grammar and dictionary which was a standard work for a long time.

These missionaries of early 1800s did make a lasting contribution by establishing schools and studying the African languages and converting them to written form. But their work was not easy. They had to overcome two major obstacles:-

Sickness and death

The tropical climate and diseases such as malaria killed many missionaries soon after they arrived in West Africa. For example, between 1804 and 1924 the CMS lost 53 out of the 89 missionaries in Sierra Leone, Gambia and the Gold Coast. In 1934, out of 649 colonists sent to Liberia from America 134 died within a few weeks of arriving.

Opposition of Chiefs.

Many Chiefs saw the missionaries as a threat to their own authority.

The missionaries claimed a superior religion to the chief and provoked them by denouncing all traditional customs.



The chiefs' suspicions about missionaries

Often chiefs welcomed the missionaries at first because they thought they could be useful e.g. The Igbo people of Nigeria thought the missionaries could provide them with British military help.

Other chiefs were impressed with the lavish gifts which the missionaries gave them in return for friendship – chains, velvet, glass, cutlery and umbrellas – all symbols of Victorian England.

But towards the end of the 1800s many West Africans became suspicious of the missionaries' motives. The colonial era had begun. Britain and France had their sights on all the West African states and often used the missionaries to help them. Although in the late 1800's missionaries were dedicated to spreading Christianity, many missionaries of the 1800s were often conscious agents of the ideas and actions of the colonial rulers.

MISSIONARIES ARRIVE IN SOUTH AFRICA

MISSIONARIES began to arrive in Southern Africa at the end of the 18th century at the same time as the British occupied the Cape.

The main missionary movement was led by the London Missionary Society (LMS) under Dr Phillip. The LMS was strongly supported by a group of politicians, headed by William Wilberforce.

Wilberforce made his mark in history as being one of the people who fought to free slaves. But in Britain he was, in fact, an enemy of the working class – he supported the laws which made trade unions illegal and the Corn Laws which allowed land owners to tax the poor.

Wilberforce was a businessman, so he aimed to make profits. When slave labour in the colonies became insufficient he was happy to denounce this slavery. But he encouraged another type of slavery in his own country by paying low wages and exploiting the workers.

Wilberforce's motives for encouraging missionary work in Southern Africa were not just to spread Christianity. He thought that the missionaries could help the colonial administration spread the British system of capitalism,

because, as he once said: "Christianity teaches the poor to be diligent, humble, patient and obedient and to accept their lowly position in life. It makes inequality between themselves and the rich less galling because under the influence of religious instruction, they endure the injustices of this world with the hope of a rich reward in the next."

Most missionaries genuinely believed in the good they were going to do. Some of them – people like Livingstone – were explorers and businessmen and wanted to make a profit out of their mission work. All of them, through their teachings, helped the trade of the European merchants who soon followed them. For example, once a community accepted Christianity, they would all want to buy European goods, especially clothes.

This meant that people had to earn money to buy goods. To earn money they had to work for the newly settled farmers.

In this way the missionaries were used by the colonial administration. Some missionaries co-operated willingly but many were not happy with the situation.



David Livingstone meets a Hippo. Livingstone was one of the missionaries who came to Africa in the late 1800s. His passion in life was exploration rather than spreading the Gospel.

THE MISSIONARIES' JOB

BRITAIN'S colonial expansion policy during the nineteenth century was carried out in different ways. Sometimes there was a direct military attack as when the British fought the Ashanti of Ghana, or they combined a military attack with trying to 'soften up' the inhabitants by using the missionaries. This method was used in Southern Africa. With the British occupation of the Cape, the missionaries were attracted to the area. Once the missionaries had been accepted by the inhabitants, the colonial administration began to use the missionaries to help them in their colonial expansion process.

The typical first step was for the missionary to approach a chief humbly, with his Bible in his hand, and ask for a small piece of land on which to build a mission station.

This was followed by an "agreement" between the chief and the governor, so that Britain became 'friend and protector' of the chief. The chief was paid a salary and given an 'advisor' who, after he had successfully undermined the influence of the chief, was made a magistrate. Too late the chiefs realised that the white man meant to "steal our people and become magistrates and chiefs themselves."

Dr Phillip, the leader of the London Missionary society, had suggested the idea of advisors in the first place and he encouraged the British Government to support more of them. "A total expenditure on agents of even R6 000 would cost much less than armies," he said.

The chiefs handed over more and more land and in return received



Van der Kemp

more mission stations, trading stores and magistrates. Large pieces of land were handed out to Dutch and British farmers. At this stage Africans did not think of "owning" land in the official sense. So they didn't hesitate to allow the chiefs to use areas for mission stations. They didn't realise the implications of this. When the administration issued deeds and papers of ownership they suddenly found they didn't have enough land to support their people.

Having lost their land and their cattle the people were forced to work for the farmers. A black man summed up the situation with these words, "The missionary came here and said. "Let us Pray", and we closed our eyes, and when we responded "Amen" at the end of the prayer, we found the Bible in our hands but lo and behold our land had gone into the hands of the missionary".

The missionaries were successful in their preaching and the people trusted them. Since they learnt to speak an African language they acted as interpreters when the administrators wanted to draw up treaties. They were also very useful as military advisers since they knew the geography of the land, better than the invaders themselves.

The functions of the missionaries were summed up by Dr Phillip himself when he said, "while our missionaries are everywhere scattering the seeds of civilisation... they are extending the British

interests, British influences and the British Empire... Wherever the missionary places his standard among a savage, their prejudices against the colonial government give way, their dependence upon the Colony is increased by the creation of artificial wants... Industry, trade and agriculture spring up."

Divide and rule

The missionaries often used the method of "Divide and Rule" to break down the power of the chief. A missionary called Dr van der Kemp, who arrived in the Cape with the LMS in the early 19th century, was very good at this and was praised as being the most useful agent of the government.

Van der Kemp worked among the AmaXhosa in the area around the present-day Graaff Reinet, Ndlambe a Xhosa chief refused to recognize the Fish River as the boundary between the Xhosa-speaking tribes and the white settlers. The only way the British could force him to his knees was by splitting the Xhosa people. Dr van der Kemp was a great help. He had converted a number of Xhosa people to Christianity and set up mission stations. Amongst them was Ngqika, a nephew of Ndlambe. Ngqika joined forces with the colonial forces to destroy Ndlambe and his people. The mission station was used as a base for military action.



Dr. John Philip

MISSIONARIES - FRIEND OR FOE?

WHILE it is true that the missionaries brought great benefits to the people of Africa, it is also true that what they did was part of the colonial system. Their activities helped to subject the people of Africa to their colonial masters.

The people themselves saw the missionaries in this light, as can be seen in the Gikuyu proverb, “There is no difference between a missionary and a settler”.

Probably the worst result of these missionaries work was the way in which they made the black people feel they were “inferior” and that

they should be “respectful” to their white masters and never oppose these masters who were placed above them by God.

As more and more countries began to shrug off colonialism and become independent the church began to re-examine itself, and it is still doing so today.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION

THE discovery of gold and diamonds opened up vast possibilities for the development of commerce and industry. There was an increasing demand for black labour on mines, farms and growing industries.

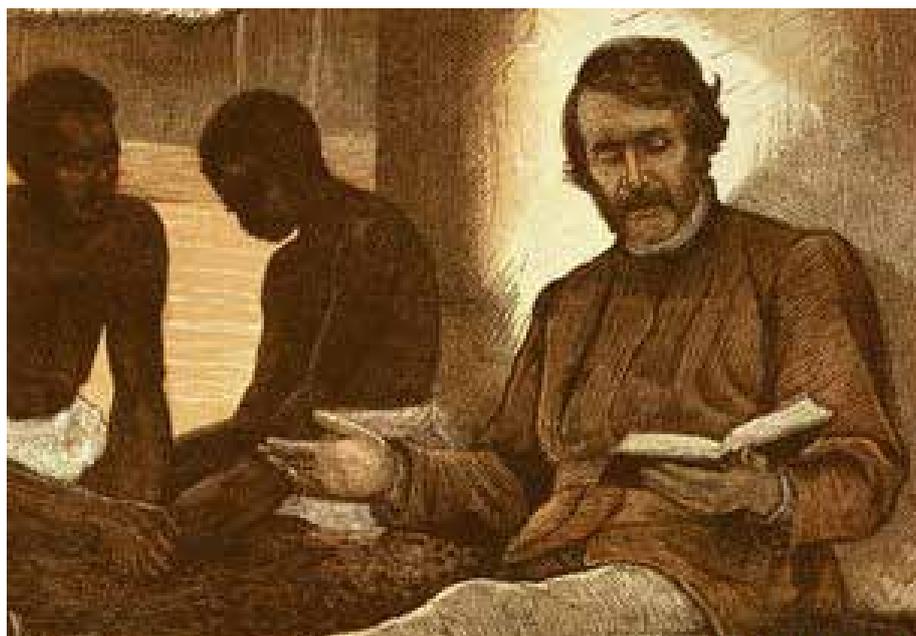
The colonial government realised that the Africans had to be able to read so that they could be more useful in the new economic system. Since the missionaries had already started to teach people to read the Bible and even to write in some cases, they were placed at the centre of the new education schemes. Money was poured into increased missionary activity and the establishment of more mission schools.

The missionaries were instructed to give “higher education to a portion of native youths, to raise up among them what might be called an educated “class”. They could then become teachers and missionaries

themselves and owe their allegiance to the government of the white man who paid them.

However, many mission-educated people, used their reading and writing skills to advance the cause of the dispossessed blacks, e.g. Sol Plaatje, Chief Albert Luthuli and all the leaders of the African National Congress formed in 1912.

By 1893 the mission schools in the Cape Colony were only for blacks. Almost all blacks who went to school were educated in mission schools. Most white children went to government schools.



A Missionary preaching to his converts.



The church has always played an important part in shaping the history of South Africa. In contrast to early missionaries, contemporary church members have taken a stand against injustice.

Africa's fight for survival

THE start of the 20th century found Africa defeated by the colonial powers of Europe. Some history books have suggested that the African peoples did not offer much resistance. But nothing can be further from the truth.

The whole history of the 19th and early 20th centuries is filled with the struggles of the African peoples who realised that their freedom and their lives were at stake.

In some parts of Africa, as in South Africa, the struggle against

European conquest and domination began as early as the 1650s, more than 300 years ago.

All over Africa the story is basically the same. In an unequal contest the people resisted the conquest of their land, the plundering of their mineral, agricultural and human resources.

The contest was unequal because the European soldiers had guns and bullets – and a seemingly endless supply of these weapons. In most parts of Africa people fought with spears and sticks. Only in a few cases did they manage to get enough guns to be able to challenge the European conquerors, but then

supplies were limited and repairs impossible.

Great leaders, men and women, were thrown up during these struggles. Of these people very little has been written. It is only now that scholars are beginning to put together the real story of this resistance.

It has become clear that in Africa, as in all other parts of the world, human beings never meekly accepted their oppression. In this and the next two issues of Learning Post we shall tell the story of a few of these early wars of resistance, taking our examples from different parts of Africa.

AFRICA'S WARS OF RESISTANCE

ONE OF Africa's first war of resistance against colonialism was fought by the Khoikhoi people in a heroic attempt to prevent Dutch conquest of South African land and people.

The war broke out in 1659, seven years after Van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape and only two years after the Khoikhoi had realized that the Dutch intended settling permanently

At first relations between the Dutch and the Khoikhoi had been peaceable. Since Diaz' arrival some 200 years before, the Khoikhoi had welcomed many other seamen (Portuguese, English, Dutch and French) who had wanted to stop over the at Cape. They saw Van Riebeeck's party as being no different. They were happy to trade with the foreigners as long as Khoikhoi rights were respected.

But Van Riebeeck was different. Soon after his arrival he built a fort and cattle kraals. In 1657 the "free burghers" arrived – the first permanent Dutch settlers. And then the Khoikhoi knew that their independence was in danger: the Dutch intended to stay.

At first the Khoikhoi leaders co-operated willingly with the Dutch. This was especially so of Autshumoa (called Harry by the Europeans) and Krotoa (called Eva). They acted as interpreters and helped to carry on the trade between the Dutch and the Khoikhoi.

But the Khoikhoi soon realised that this trade could threaten their independence. The Dutch

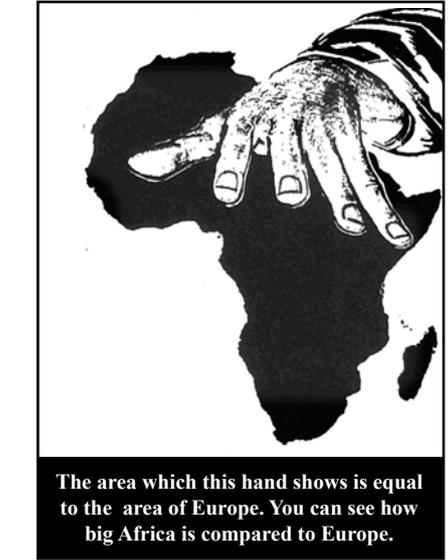
colonists wanted large numbers of sheep and cattle from them. Next the colonists would be needing pastures for their animals - that is, land. And obviously the Khoikhoi were unwilling to give away their ancestral lands.

And so an uneasy relationship developed whereby the Khoikhoi tried to keep the trade working in their favour. One of their main tactics was to prevent the colonists from making regular contact with the cattle-rich Khoikhoi people in the interior. In this way the Cape Khoikhoi could control the supply of meat to the Dutch.

This infuriated Van Riebeeck. His diary is full of comments about how his problems would be solved if he could just lay his hands on the cattle of the Khoikhoi

At first he tried to avoid war with the Khoikhoi because he feared that he would displease his employers, the Council of 17 of the Dutch East India Company. The Council of 17 saw the Khoikhoi as suppliers of cheap fresh meat. They thus gave Van Riebeeck strict instructions "not to injure the natives in their person or in their cattle."

But relations between the Dutch and the Khoikhoi went from bad to worse until May 1659 saw the start of the "first Hottentot War" as it is called in South African history books. On the Dutch side it was



an attempt to grab land, cattle and control of the meat supply. On the Khoikhoi side it was a desperate attempt to resist conquest and dispossession.

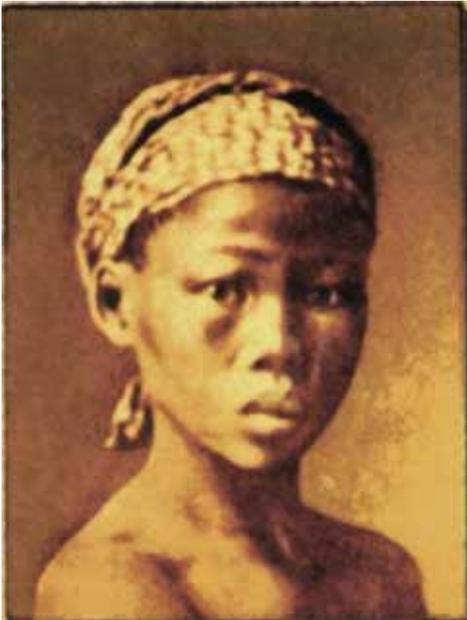
The Dutch organised themselves for an attack on the Khoikhoi: they strengthened the fort and built a watch-house to observe the movements of the Khoikhoi resisters.

They also put their slaves in chains because many had tried to join the Khoikhoi.

The different Khoikhoi groups joined forces and waged economic guerilla warfare against the colonists. Under their leaders Doman and Autshumoa they burnt down crops and grass and abducted the cattle of the colonists.

The war lasted for a year. In May 1660 the Khoikhoi eventually had to make peace. Though defeated, they openly accused Van Riebeeck of having waged the war to take from them "the land which had belonged to them for all ages."

The same story was to be repeated throughout South Africa's history. Always it was land that the colonists wanted. They also wanted labour, but it was only after the discovery of diamonds in 1860 (and later gold) that the demand for labour became greater than the demand for land.



DIPLOMAT OR TRAITOR?

KROTOA (called Eva by the Europeans) was an eight year old Khoikhoi girl when Van Riebeeck arrived at the Cape. She was taken into his household where she learnt the language and the ways of the Dutch.

At the age of 13 she became the chief interpreter at the castle, and it was not long before she was conducting diplomatic negotiations between the Dutch and the Khoikhoi. In time, however, the Khoikhoi became extremely hostile towards Krotoa because they thought that she was favouring the Dutch and not protecting the interests of the people.

Recent historical accounts have differed in their reaction to Krotoa. One writer has called her ‘one of the most gifted diplomats of all times, inspired by a deep and glowing passion to join Khoikhoi and Dutch into a single nation.’ Another has called her the first traitor to the African people.

Scramble for ownership

The Khoikhoi people were very clear about what they were fighting for in the war against the Dutch colonists: they were struggling to remain the rightful owners of their land. During the peace negotiations of April 1660 they accused the Dutch of being foreign invaders who had stolen their land, as this extract from Van Riebeeck’s diary shows.

“**A**T THE FORT TODAY, peace was renewed with the chiefs and overlord of the Kaapmans (Gogosoa), with Harry and with all the principal men and elders . . .

They strongly insisted that we had been appropriating more and more of their land, which had been theirs all these centuries, and on which they had been accustomed to let their cattle graze.

They asked if they would be allowed to do such a thing supposing they went to Holland, and they added: “It would be of

little consequence if you people stayed here at the fort, but you come right into the interior and select the best land for yourselves without even asking whether we mind or whether it will cause us any inconvenience.”

They therefore strongly urged that they should again be given free access to this land for that purpose.

At first we argued against this, saying that there was not enough grass for their cattle as well as ours, to which they replied:

“Have we then no reason to prevent you from getting cattle, since, if

you have a large number, you will take up all our grazing grounds with them?”

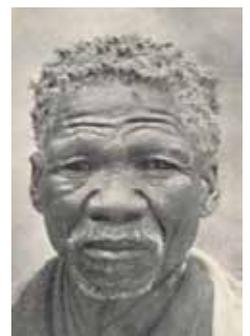
“As for your claims that the land is not big enough for both, who should rather in justice give way, the rightful owner or the foreign intruder?”

Eventually they had to be told that they had now lost the land as a result of the war and had no alternative but to admit that it was no longer theirs . . . Their land had thus justly fallen to us in a defensive war, won by the sword, as it were, and we intended to keep it.”



Although little is known about the heroic resistance of the Khoikhoi, it was they who fought the first of many wars to prevent the Europeans from conquering South African land and people.

Autshumoa, one of the Koikhoi leaders who at first was willing to co-operate with the Dutch. Known to the Europeans as Harry, he later led a guerilla war against Van Riebeeck when it became clear that the Dutch intended conquering Khoikhoi land.



NAMIBIA SEIZED

Invaders come to stay

NAMIBIA was annexed as a German colony in 1884, but it was only after 20 years of fierce resistance that the Germans could call their conquest complete. Colonialism came very suddenly to the territory. Germany was a late starter in the race to acquire colonies, and Namibia was claimed during the frantic scramble which began in 1875. In fact the Germans claimed Namibia only after the British had hesitated too long in deciding whether or not to take over the territory.

The people living in the territory at the time were the Ovambos in the north, the Hereros more or less in the centre and the Namas in the South. In among all these groups lived people called Bergdamaras and San.

The Ovambos were a farming people and had both crops and livestock. The Hereros and the Namas were almost exclusively pastoral people: they farmed mainly with sheep, goats, cattle and horses.

The German authorities tried to extend their control over the territory in two ways: they used certain tactics to divide the Namibian people from each other. And they took over more and more of the fertile land. But in the end German rule was imposed by force of arms.

Divide and rule

Competition for grazing land had led to a series of disputes between the Herero- and Nama-speaking peoples. These quarrels played directly into the hands of the Germans.

They offered 'treaties of protection' and other benefits to one group against the other and so tried to divide the people.

During the 1880s Maharero, head of the Herero-speaking people, entered into such a 'treaty of protection' with the German authorities. He wanted protection against attacks by the Nama people led by Hendrik Witbooi.

Witbooi was astounded that any Namibian should ally himself with the colonial invader, and wrote a stern letter to Maharero:

"You call yourself Supreme Chief of Damaraland . . . but my dear Kaptein you have now accepted another earthly government, the German government, in order to protect yourself from the terrors of our war power and through this mighty nation to destroy me. . .

"My dear Kaptein, you will eternally regret your action in having handed over to the white man the right to govern your country. After all, our war is not as serious a matter as you think. . . But this thing that you have done, that you are doing, surrender yourself to the white man, will be a burden that you will carry on your shoulders..."

Land

A large number of German settlers emigrated to the territory, mainly because of the warm climate and because there were many other European settlers in the neighbouring Cape Colony. As result of white settlement, more and more land was lost by the people of the territory.

Large parts of the fertile land in the south were taken from the people and turned into European owned

farms. By 1892, 8 years after annexation, the colonial authorities were creating "reserves" for the African people.

The plan was to drive more and more people in the reserves, but it had to be postponed time and again because of the resistance which the authorities faced.

Resistance

At no stage did the people of the territory willingly submit to colonial conquest. Throughout the country there were acts of resistance. But being isolated they were quickly suppressed by the German colonial troops.

All this changed in 1903 when the Bondelzwarts people, in an act of desperation, rose up against the German rulers. This act of theirs became the signal for all the other Namibian people to rise up one after the other until the whole country was in a state of war against the German authorities.

The emperor of the German Empire, William II, reacted hysterically to the news of the uprising: "We must strengthen and increase our colonial troops by whole battalions," he declared. "Otherwise we stand to lose all our colonial possessions."

So began Germany's longest and costliest war ever fought in Namibia and the desperate attempt on the part of the people of the country to save their birthright.

**Hendrik Witbooi, one of the
legendary leaders of the 1903 - 1907
Namibian uprising.**





The Commander of the German colonial troops in Namibia, General von Trotha. His policy was to exterminate the Hereros.

German colonial might prove too much for Namibian resistance fighters

NAMIBIA'S war of resistance lasted for four years. It was fought by peoples united in their hatred of German colonialism and was greatly influenced by a leader who today is almost unknown: Jakob Marengo.

The son of a Herero-speaking woman, Jakob Marengo has been described as “the most important and far-sighted of all the leaders of the Liberation war” And yet if history books mention him at all, they usually describe him as some cattle thief or robber.

Marengo fought uninterruptedly against German colonial rule for more than four years: from October 1903 to the end of 1907. During

those years his name and the names of his lieutenants were constantly mentioned in the newspapers of Europe and of South Africa.

Journalists and authors competed for interviews with him. Although they almost all favoured the Germans, they could not help writing about Marengo's towering personality. His personality, his education and work experience made him an influential leader.

Educated by a German missionary Jakob Marengo spent 18 months in Europe with the missionary and his family. For many years he worked on the South African gold mines as a migrant worker. He spoke fluent English, Afrikaans, German, Herero and Nama.

These experiences all helped him to see Namibia in a new way. He realised that all the different groups of people were affected in the same way by German colonial rule. He saw that it was necessary to make his knowledge and abilities available to his countrymen. He

did so during the 4 year war of resistance.

War

In October 1903 the Bondelzwarts gave the signal for the start of the war. Marengo joined the Bondelzwarts and they fought with courage and determination. But at this stage they fought alone and suffered a bloody defeat.

Marengo knew this was not the end of the liberation war. He continued the struggle as a wanted man. Together with his men he avoided the open roads and retreated into the Karas Mountains in the south.

These mountains rise to a height of 2000 metres. They became Marengo's base.

Protected by impenetrable rock walls and deep canyons, the resistance of the “rebels” took shape. More and more people joined Marengo's forces, most of them well-armed with horses. They were drawn from all the people of the territory, united in their opposition to the colonial oppressor.

In time Marengo's forces were joined by people from the British (Cape) colony on the other side

of the Orange River. Workers from different parts of South Africa, especially from the copper mines of O’Kiep and of Little Namaqualand strengthened the resisters. Supplies were sent across the border to the guerilla fighters.

It was through this support that Marengo was able to fight continuously for 4 years. He had a mobilising effect on all the peoples of the territory and contributed to events which prolonged the war: he influenced the 80 000 Hereros who revolted on 12 January 1904 as well as the 30 000 Namas who rose up in unison 9 months later.

German response

It was after the Herero revolt that the Germans declared total war. Marengo knew all about the military might of German Imperialism. But he also knew about their weaknesses. “They don’t know where to get water and know nothing about guerilla warfare,” he told a British journalist some years later. (Cape Times 1906).

General Von Trotha was placed in command of the colonial troops. A racist, his policy was one of extermination – to kill off whole nations. He put out the following command: The Hereros as a nation must die! We don’t take any prisoners of war! Shoot to kill anyone who is on the other side! More than half the total Herero-speaking population died in this way.

Jakob Marengo strengthened his troops. His men raided European farmers for weapons as well as the smaller police stations and military outposts. In August 1904 his men inflicted a crushing defeat on Von Trotha’s troops. This brought almost the whole of the south under Marengo’s control.

Two months later the rest of the Nama-speaking people took up arms against the Germans.



Hendrik Witbooi and his Nama fighters. The Nama also suffered greatly under German rule at the start of the 20th Century

Suddenly the whole of Namaland, except for the German fortresses, was in the hands of the resisters.

This turn of events was responsible for saving the remaining 12 000 Hereros (out of about 80 000) who had managed to escape Von Trotha’s policy of extermination. Faced with an enemy which moved around the territory rapidly, the German troops suffered one defeat after another.

Setback

But in October 1905, the guerillas faced a setback: the Germans killed Hendrik Witbooi, one of the legendary leaders of the uprising. Witbooi’s people laid down their arms, but Marengo continued the struggle.

In May the next year Marengo was wounded by a German patrol which had crossed over into the Cape Colony. Although 27 of his men were killed, Marengo managed to evade capture. A few days later he and some of his men handed themselves over to the Cape Police.

They were taken to Cape Town by train and were welcomed by thousands of people eager to see the famous guerrilla leader. Within a month Marengo was freed and soon he was back in the mountains.

This news caused great excitement throughout Namibia. The German emperor placed an enormous price on Marengo’s head and German and British soldiers joined forces in searching for him. In September 1907 Marengo was killed in a battle against some English soldiers.

By the end of 1907 the uprising had ended, although some battles were still being fought a year later. The survivors were herded into concentration camps. The extermination and defeat of the African people meant that the conquest of the territory was complete.

Acknowledgement

THE MATERIAL on Jakob Marengo in this issue is based on a sketch by the German writer, Heinrich Loth.



Jakob Marengo and two of his lieutenants after handing themselves over the Cape police in Upington.

Press praises Marengo

ALTHOUGH his name seems to have disappeared from history books, Jakob Marengo was constantly mentioned in European and South African newspapers: “His conduct of military operations has something large-scale about it and is very much superior to that of all the other native captains. All in all, an excellent soldier to whom even we, his enemies, should not refuse respect.” (M Bayer).

“Marengo is an outstanding personality” (SA News, 26 May 1906). “Marengo spared wounded German soldiers and saw to it that they received medical attention.” (Zeitschrift für Kolonialpolitik, Kolonialrecht und Kolonialwirtschaft, Dec 1907).

Skilful Namibian soldiers

NAMIBIANS showed that they were not only brave soldiers but often militarily superior to the Germans. One German author described the Bondelzwarts as:

“**S**kilful horsemen, slightly built, almost unbeatable in field duty and accurate marksmen. Their method of fighting is the same as that of our infantry.

“They use both foot-soldiers and

cavalry in battle, but they never shoot from horseback. They always jump off and then shoot. When they march they seldom use the roads. Instead, they march into the veld, usually along a broad front.

“Yet they are very skilful at changing this marching column into firing lines. They sometimes crawl like snakes and at other times they run full stretch from stone to stone and from bush to bush, thus getting to within a favourable (shooting) range. . . .”

Historic deeds

THE deeds of Jacob Marengo and his people have become historic. With unavoidable respect, the journal of the German Colonial Society said: “In the recent uprising we saw so much love of fatherland and of freedom, hatred against the oppressor and preparedness to sacrifice, genuine patriotic feelings . . . so much diplomatic and military skill, such impressive strategic perspective embracing widely separated theatres of war and so much uncommon determination as one would never have believed possible.”

A German newspaper wrote: “The events in German South West Africa have given the native people much courage and will increase the self-confidence of the Africans in all parts of South Africa.”

The fighters speak

“THE Germans have taken our land. We could not accept that any longer; it is our land! The traders stole our cattle from us by clever tricks and dishonesty. We were not prepared to tolerate that any longer. Many of our people were ill-treated by the Germans and we saw no justice done unto them.”

AFRICANS REJECT FORCED LABOUR

The Maji-Maji uprising



“Attention! We are at attention. Turn towards Donde country (inland). Turn towards the black water (the ocean). Destroy the red earth. Destroy. Destroy. Destroy.”

This marching song could be heard in many parts of Southern Tanzania in the early parts of July 1905.

The “red earth” were the German colonisers, Tanganyika - as it was then known - was colonised by the Germans during the 1890s. Soon after setting up the colonial administration, the Germans began to grow cash crops, like cotton, for export to Europe.

The people of Southern Tanzania and the coastal area were used as forced labour on these cotton farms. This account by a worker describes how the forced labour was organised:

“During the cultivation there was much suffering. We, the labour conscripts, stayed in the front line cultivating. Then behind us was an overseer whose work it was to whip us. Behind the overseer there was a jumbe, and every jumbe stood behind his fifty men. Behind the line of jumbes stood Bivana Kinoo himself. Then, behold death there.”

Forced labour, the taxes and the added suffering enforced by German rule, caused great discontent. What did the people do?

At the time of the German conquest of Tanganyika, the people were divided into many small groups. Any resistance was quickly crushed. And so the people were aware of their weakness and the strength of the German colonial army, but still wanted to know “what to do.”

The prophet Kinjikitile

Then in the year 1904, a prophet rose. His name was Kinjikitile and he taught that all people of Tanzania were one people and that only unity would defeat the Germans. Kinjikitile’s message also promised the people protection against the

guns of the Germans, through the power of Maji (sacred water). It is this that gave its name to the uprising – The Maji Maji.

The message spreads

Soon the message of Kinjikitile spreads from Southern Tanzania to the coast and other regions. The different people of Tanzania were united in a single purpose – to free themselves from German colonialism.

The uprising

In the last week of July 1905, the people of the southern coastal areas of Tanzania destroyed the cotton fields of the Germans. The uprising had started. Through August and September news of the uprising spread, and more groups joined.

Faced by a united people, the Germans suffered serious defeat so that two months after the uprising, the German Forces existed only in the coast and in four powerful military forts.

To gain victory, the Maji-Maji fighters had to capture the forts. However, the superior fire power of the German machine guns inflicted

heavy casualties on them.

Although many leaders were captured and executed, the uprising continued in many parts of the country until 1907. During the years 1906 and 1907, food became scarce and by 1907, famine had broken out. It was famine that finally defeated the Maji-Maji fighters. Many people died of starvation.

Although the attempt to end German colonisation was defeated, the impact of the Maji-Maji rising influenced the course of events in Tanzania for many years.

Addressing the UN in 1956 President Nyerere described the impact of the Maji-Maji rising on the history of Tanzania as follows:

“The people fought because, they did not believe in the white man’s right to govern and civilise the black. They rose in a great rebellion not through fear of a terrorist movement or a superstitious oath, but in response to a natural call, a call of the spirit, rising in the hearts of all men, and of all times, educated or uneducated, to rebel against foreign domination.

AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF OPPRESSION...

THE BAMBATHA REBELLION

On February 8, 1906, two white policemen were killed by a group of Africans in the Richmond district of the colony of Natal. The policemen had been sent to enforce the new Poll tax. For the next two months the colony of Natal witnessed a number of incidents in which many Africans refused to pay the new tax. Martial law was declared and the colonial army was sent to these areas.

Chiefs were deposed, cattle were confiscated, home and crops burnt as part of the colonial reaction to the tax defiance.

This was the beginning of what became known as the “Bambatha Rebellion.”

Bambatha, who had become chief in 1890, lived with his people on the white-owned farms in the Umloti district. The high rents, the poor quality of the land and the different taxes were the cause of many clashes between Bambatha and the colonial administration.

Land, labour and laws

Between 1893 and 1906, forty eight new laws and regulations affecting the lives of African people living in colonial Natal were passed. The most recent was the new Poll Tax of 1906. The various

legislation and taxation measures were designed to get the Africans to work on the white farms of Natal. The legislation was strongly imposed – in 1906, 45 000 Africans were charged under the different Masters and Servants laws operating in Natal.

Besides legislation, the issue of land and land poverty was of vital importance.

As more and more land was taken up by the white farmers in Natal, the greater the poverty experienced by the African peoples. It was not unusual for white-owned farms to be between 2000-3000 acres. Of the 12 million acres of land in Natal, over 7¼ million was owned by whites. Of the remaining 4¼ million acres approximately 2¼ million had been set aside as Trust land for the occupation of the African people.

No additions were made to the Trust lands so that by 1900 these lands were not only overpopulated but overworked as well.

It is against this background of land hunger, poverty, oppressive



The name of Chief Bambatha lives on today as a symbol of brave resistance in South Africa.

legislation and crippling taxes, that the resistance to the Poll Tax of 1906 must be seen.

The period of resistance

In February 1906 Bambatha was summoned by the magistrate of Greytown to pay the new tax. Fearing capture and imprisonment Bambatha did not respond to the magistrate's order but instead fled to Zululand. He returned to Natal in March but discovered that he had been deposed as chief by the colonial authorities.

Capturing the new chief, Bambatha, and about 200 of his people made their way to the forests of Nkandla on the border of Zululand. The forest area of Nkandla was rugged and mountainous, and ideal area for safety. From the Nkandla forests, Bambatha sent messages to all the chiefs of Natal and Zululand, urging them to join him in resisting colonial rule.

During April and May Bambatha kept to the forest area, avoiding direct confrontation with the colonial forces. Then in June, the colonial forces discovered the location of Bambatha's stronghold and attacked it.

In the attack many of the leaders, including Bambatha, were killed. This defeat did not bring the rising to an end. For the next three months the rising spread to different parts of Natal. But by September most of the groups had been defeated and martial law was finally lifted.

Some three to four thousand Africans were killed during the rising and a further seven thousand imprisoned.

Towards united resistance

The losses suffered were great yet many lessons were learned. In 1912 a country-wide South

African Native National Congress was founded. It aimed at bringing together Africans all over South Africa into a politically united group. And when John Dube the first president visited Zululand to explain this new organisation a member of the audience stated:

"I thank Bambatha. I thank Bambatha very much. Would this spirit might continue. I do not mean the Bambatha of the bush who perished in Nkandla, but I mean this new spirit which we have just heard explained!"



Chief Sigananda Shezi of the amaCube, 96, captured and humiliated by colonial troops.

Tanzania under Germany

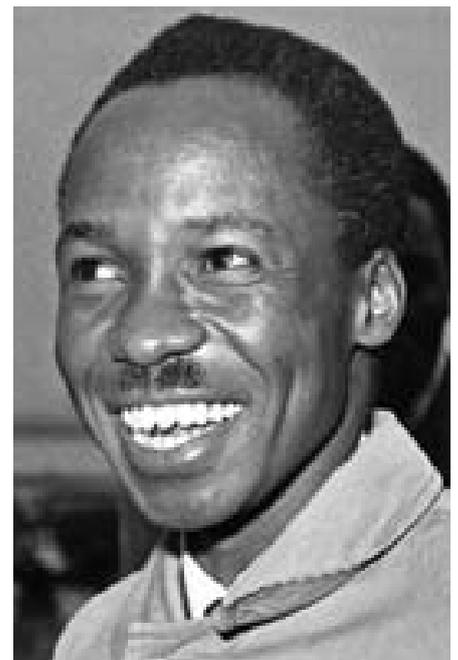
Thirteen years after the Germans had colonised Tanzania, an 18-year-old schoolgirl describes colonial life under German rule:

“Here at Chiwata there is a court every Wednesday and many people are beaten and some are imprisoned by order of the German Government. But we, who have for so long been used to govern ourselves, find the laws of these Germans very hard, especially the taxes, because we black people have no money, our wealth consists of millet, maize, oil, and groundnuts, etc. Here at Chiwata two houses have been built, one for the court and one for the prison.”

In this extract, the same schoolgirl, now a woman, describes the suffering and horror of starvation that was experienced by the people in 1906-1907.

“We and all the people in our village are in the same condition, we are suffering from famine. Since my birth I have never seen such scarcity. I have seen famine but not one causing people to die. But in this famine many are dying, some are unable to do any work at all, they have no strength, their food consists of insects from the woods which they dig up and cook and eat, some they eat without cooking. Many have died through eating these things from the woods and wild fruits.

Some do not die at once but when they taste good food like millet, maize, or beans, etc., which is their usual food, at once their bodies swell and they feel ill and die, but some recover.”



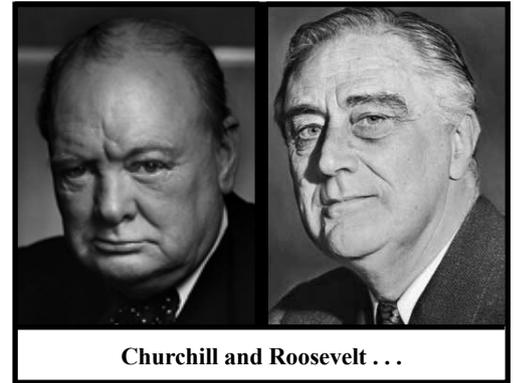
Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere ...
“The effects of colonialism are still with us.”

The Crumbling of Colonialism

COLONIAL rule in Africa was not made to last forever. But this was not always as obvious as it is today.

In the 1930s and the early 1940s colonial administrations all over Africa were strong and unchallenged. Everything looked as if it was to stay like that for many years to come.

No-one expected the colonial system to break down as rapidly as it did, but within less than 20 years after World War II most colonies had received independence. In order to understand why this happened so quickly we need to look at what happened outside Africa.



Churchill and Roosevelt . . .

One of the great turning points in the history of modern Africa was the Second World War. It was only in 1945 that the major colonial powers, Britain and France, began to consider, ‘decolonisation’.

Also, it was only after the war that great nationalist mass movements emerged all over Africa. They began demanding equality and independence with such a loud voice that they could no longer be ignored.

During World War II the western and eastern European nations struggled against Nazi Germany. They fought against German imperialism in an attempt to keep

their independence. At the same time they were also fighting against the racism which played such an important role in Hitler’s party.

This struggle generated strong anti-racist, anti-imperialist and democratic feelings which found expression in the Atlantic Charter of 1941.

Meeting in the heat of the war, in 1941, President Roosevelt of the USA and Prime Minister Churchill of Great Britain declared to the world:

The signatories of the Charter “respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they live:

And they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.”

Churchill later said that with this he had been referring to European nations under the yoke of Nazi rule. But many politically conscious people in Africa and Asia thought that this statement applied to them. Roosevelt also insisted that it “applied to all humanity”.

The Atlantic Charter had a strong effect, particularly on the educated elite in African colonies. Also, it prepared the ground for militant and wide-spread anti-colonial agitation.



World War II became a turning point in Africa’s modern history.

PAN-AFRICANISTS - determined to be free

AFRICA's anti-colonial struggle was helped by the growth of Pan-Africanism, a movement rooted in centuries of slavery but which became most influential after World War II.

“African nationalism is like a great forest tree,” wrote two African historians. “Its trunk is the Pan African movement, which gives a sense of solidarity to all the different people of the continent.”

Pan-Africanist meant that all people of African descent had something in common. Whether they lived in the Americas or in Africa, all shared a history of slavery, domination and oppression. They all had to stand together and support each other in the fight for liberation.

The Afro-Jamaican Marcus Garvey and the Afro-American WEB DuBois were very important. From the beginning of the 1900s, DuBois organised Pan African congresses. He said he worked “to bring about at the earliest possible time the industrial and spiritual emancipation of the Negro people.”

In later years, he became concerned with colonialism and economic exploitation in Africa. “Colonies are the slums of the world”, he wrote.

1945 Congress

DuBois chaired the important fifth Pan-African Congress, held in Manchester. It was the first time that the Pan-Africanist movement was run by Africans themselves, for their aims

By 1945 a group of Afro-American and British Pan-Africanists felt that the educated elite and the working class should unite in a common front. Colonialism could be fought better that way, they said.

At that time the labour movement in Britain was inviting representatives from the colonies for a World Federation of Trade Unions conference. The Pan Africanists organised quickly. They ensured that representatives from the colonies would discuss Pan-African matters as well as trade unions.



Marcus Garvey (left) and WEB Du Bois . . . fathers of Pan-Africanism.



Kwame Nkrumah (left) and Jomo Kenyatta . . . determined to be free.

In March 1945 it was also decided that the fifth Pan-Africanist Congress should coincide with the WFTU meeting in October of that year. Amongst the organizers were Kwame Nkrumah of Gold Coast (Ghana) and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya.

All resolutions adopted at the congress had a common feature: anti-colonialism. The language was clear and strong, and the words were heard in many African lands:

“We are determined to be free. We want education. We want the right to earn a decent living; the right to express our thoughts and emotions, to adopt and create forms of beauty.

“We demand for Black African autonomy and independence . . . We will fight in every way we can for freedom, democracy and social betterment.”

Afterwards people like Nkrumah and Kenyatta went home and put into practice what they had learnt. Soon it became clear the ‘decolonisation’ could no longer be stopped.



Delegates at the 1945 Pan-Africanist Congress.
Note Jomo Kenyatta in the third row from the front, centre.

WANTED: independence

GROWING cities and the movement of people off the land into urban employment were only two of the changes taking place in the Africa of the 1940s and 1950s.

After World War II, Europe and the USA thought that Africa's raw materials could help restore their shattered economies. As a result they started huge 'development' and 'aid' programmes to increase production.

The growing economies demanded more skilled workers

than before and many African countries experienced a boom in their educational systems. More newspapers were printed and radio stations established.

With all these changes, people in the colonies began to spell out their demands even more loudly than before. Above all

they wanted equality, democracy and independence. Slowly the nationalist mass movements grew into a powerful force.

Eventually it was the combination of these demands with events outside Africa which brought about decolonisation.

WORLD WAR II AND COLONIALISM

THE Second World War changed the world. It also changed world opinion on matters like colonialism and enabled people in the colonies to continue their fight for freedom with renewed vigour.

After the war it became increasingly difficult for Britain and France to justify direct political domination. Both countries were exhausted by the war. Britain particularly had lost her status as the leading world power – to the USA and the Soviet Union.

The British Empire was crumbling away. India received independence in 1948. Ceylon and Burma stopped being colonies. In Malaya the British had to fight Malayan guerrillas for over seven years and in the end had to grant independence.

Similarly, France was defeated at Dien Bien Phu in Indo-China in 1954. In the Dutch East Indies, a bitter and effective struggle forced the colonial masters to grant independence after 1951.

Thus Africans saw how huge colonial empires were destroyed. They were encouraged by the success elsewhere of the anti-colonial struggle. In the face of all this, how could Britain and France hope to keep their African colonies?

African soldiers returned from European and North African battlefields with new ideas. One of them wrote: "We have been told what we fought for. That is "freedom". We want freedom nothing but freedom . . ."

And DuBois himself wrote: If armed natives were going to be used in European disputes, would not native colonial revolt be a matter of years?"

Other effects

The Second World War also had other effects. The rise of the USA to a leading world power had many implications for colonial Africa. The USA never colonised Africa or Asia in the way Britain and France had done. Quite the contrary, they had many anti-colonial traditions in their own.

The USA's influence first showed itself in the formation of the United Nations Organisation in 1945. The Charter of the UNO included a very clear statement about the rights of all peoples to freedom and justice. It was adopted mainly through North American pressure and against the wishes of the colonial powers.

When many former Asian colonies got their independence and a seat in the UN they knew how to use it. They made sure that the world heard what they had to say about colonialism.

Led by India, they formed a block within the UN. Soon they were joined by Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia. The sense of solidarity between these peoples spread over Africa South of the Sahara. In 1955 they all held a conference at Bandung in Indonesia. Ever since then Africans knew that there were friends to support them in their struggle against racism and colonialism.

So World War II had many important results. It was not only that the world of post-1945 looked different from the world of 1939. It was also that people in Europe, America, Asia and Africa had changed their ideas about the world.

This was especially true with regard to colonialism. Anti-colonial agitation had grown and become an accepted concept for many millions of people.

BREAKING COLONIAL CHAINS

COLONISED Africa regained her freedom in one of two ways: by receiving political power from the colonial masters, or by armed struggle. Depending on how it came, freedom took different forms in different African countries.

Britain and France were the main colonial powers. After World War II they began to accept that they should decolonise; that is, that they should hand over power to African political parties and leaders. Of course they would only give independence within the borders which Europe had forced on the African continent.

The colonial powers tried to make sure that the African leaders would govern the countries as they had done, and in most colonies such leaders were found.

Because the colonial power was willing to “give” them independence, the leadership organised the people to demand freedom and independence without violence. They went through all the different stages of decolonisation. Usually the main disagreement between the leadership and the colonial power was over the speed at which decolonisation should take place.



Nyerere and Kaunda ... successfully negotiated for independence.

Different struggles lead to different freedoms

All the French colonies (except Algeria) and most of the British colonies “received” their independence in this way. Although different colonies experienced different problems, the main effects were the same: the political and economic systems hardly changed. They remained much the same as they had been under colonial rule.

Armed struggle

In those colonies where there were white settler minorities, the movements for national independence had to start an armed struggle. This was especially so in Algeria, the Portuguese colonies, Rhodesia and Namibia where the settler minorities would not agree to decolonisation and majority rule.

The liberation wars had important

effects on the ways in which the countries were later governed. None of the western countries such as the USA, Britain, France or (Germany) would give military aid and training to the guerilla fighters. So most of the movements turned to the communist countries for aid.

The training of thousands of young people in China, the Soviet Union and in other socialist countries, had a strong influence on their ideas and actions. They began to study the ideas of revolutionary socialists such as Marx, Lenin, Mao Tse Tung, Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevera, Fidel Castro and others.

As a result, the militants of the movements for national liberation began to question whether it was enough simply to obtain political independence from the colonial

power. They began to insist that it was necessary to get rid of the capitalist system as such if the people were really to become free. They saw the capitalist system as the real cause of colonial oppression and believed that it should be replaced by some kind of socialist state.

Thus the main difference between the movements for independence and the movements for national liberation were the amount of violence used and the ideas concerning the future running of the country.

Another important difference was the strong consciousness in the movements for national liberation of the equality between men and women. Women played an important role in the struggle for independence, as we will see during the next two weeks.

GHANA

fights British bonds

GHANA was the first of the African colonies to break through to independence. Through the political skill of Kwame Nkrumah the British were forced to hand over power by 1957, but the country's economic system remained as before.

Known as Gold Coast, the country was seen as a “model colony” by the British administrators. Its growing economy supplied Britain with important raw materials and foods such as cocoa and palm oil. The colony also provided a market for British manufactured products.

Over the years a well-developed educational system produced a new elite – lawyers, businessmen, etc. The British saw these people as suitable successors, but did not expect to have to hand over power until some day in the distant future.

The British Administration started on the road to decolonisation in 1946. They introduced a new constitution which provided for 18 elected African representatives on the colonial legislative council. But they moved too slowly and within three years events had moved beyond their control.

Nationalist leaders like J Danquah thought that the 1946 constitution offered too little. In the following year they started the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) to fight for more concessions.

The new organisation consisted mainly of well-to-do lawyers who were quite conservative. Their anti-colonial speeches rarely included any mention of the common people – the cocoa-growers, soldiers who had fought in the war, the market women and the people who had left their villages to seek work in the towns.

Soon, however, the UGCC leaders saw that they needed the support of these ‘common people’ if they were to succeed in their demands. But they did not want to start a revolution. So they turned to a man who was well-liked and known to be a good organiser. They decided to ask Kwame Nkrumah to do political organising for them.

Nkrumah was successful. He worked out a plan for mass organisation to get the active support of popular organisations like farmers’ and women’s organisations. More and more people came to his rallies, and the conservative UGCC leaders began to watch him suspiciously.

Then early in 1948, disturbances (as the British called them) broke out quiet unexpectedly. A successful boycott of European ships had brought people to the markets of Accra to see if the promised price cut had been made. At the same time an ex-serviceman was killed by a British policeman when he demonstrated peacefully for higher pensions.

In the reaction that followed some shops were attacked, looted and burnt. Many people lost their lives, and the picture of a ‘model colony’ was destroyed.

Breakaway

Because popular agitation, awareness and support for him had increased, Nkrumah decided to break way from the UGCC and form his own party. This party was called the Convention People’s Party (CPP) and soon attracted mass support.

The British feared anti-colonial agitation. They suppressed it and tried to work closely with the old chiefs and conservative UGCC. Nkrumah and other leaders were imprisoned.



But Nkrumah and the CPP had massive support, as was shown during a huge strike in 1950. During the same year municipal elections in several towns were all won by the CPP. Even while Nkrumah was still in prison, the CPP triumphed in the general elections in February 1950.

Eventually the British had to back

down. They released Nkrumah and allowed him to lead the newly elected government. This was not complete independence because the British colonial authorities were still present in the country, but was an important step.

During the next six years the British handed over power gradually. The

CPP was bitterly opposed by the old chiefs and the UGCC, but in all the elections the party won far more than 50% of the seats.

In 1957 Gold Coast became independent within the British Commonwealth and in 1960 it became a Republic with Nkrumah as its president.

Neo-Colonies

IN GRANTING Ghana political independence the British had made sure that the country's economic pattern, which was working so well to their advantage, would not be disturbed.

Nkrumah could do nothing to change the system whereby the farmers who grew the cocoa received 72 shillings a load while the world price fixed in London was 144 shillings a load.

With the administration in the hands of African leaders, it was as if a factory was run by a different management. But the factory and its products remained the same as before. As before it was controlled by Britain and completely dependent on her.

Cocoa and palm oil, the riches of the country, were not used inside the country but were exported to Britain. Instead of manufacturing their own products Ghanaians provided a market for British manufactured products.

Such was the colonial relationship and so it remained after the colony had been given political independence. Almost the only thing which changed was the term used to describe the newly independent state. It became known as a neo-colony.

In fact, almost all African countries which "received" their independence in the first half of the 1960s turned out to be such neo-colonies. Until they are economically liberated, many African countries today remain in the power of their former colonial masters and other industrial states.

One TANZANIA, one Struggle

THE growth of a forceful nationalist movement was the main reason why Tanzania becomes the first country in East Africa to regain independence.

The Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) was formed in 1954. It aimed to get control of the Legislative Council and gained mass support very rapidly. Within a matter of seven years independence was granted (by 1961). Three reasons contributed to TANU's success:

- People in rural areas had been involved in politics since the 1930s. There was much popular resistance to the colonial administration's attempts to enforce measures such as terracing, cattle dipping and increased cultivation. So when TANU began to express peasant demands they very quickly gained thousands of members.
- Tanganyika had a long tradition of non-tribal politics and a single national language which most people

understood: Swahili. Cultural associations formed much earlier by Arab and Asian immigrants were later joined by African clerks and civil servants.

They also attracted the few young intellectuals of the country like Julius Nyerere. Out of these associations grew the Tanganyika Africa Association, the forerunner of TANU.

- There was also a tradition of resistance to colonial rule, as when the Maji-Maji rebellion broke out in 1905.

Nyerere and the TANU leadership managed to bring these three traditions together to forge a modern nationalist movement which challenged the British colonial rulers.



ALGERIA'S struggle for liberation

“THE ALGERIAN REVOLUTION is not and cannot be a mere fight for the conquest of political power. It is an economic and social, as well as a political revolution. Independence cannot be an end in itself.”

These words were spoken in 1960 by a member of the Algerian National Liberation Front. They clearly show the difference between Algeria and other African colonies in the struggle for independence.

While many other colonies negotiated their freedom. The Algerian people had to fight a war to achieve theirs. They also saw the need to make major changes in the new Algerian society.

Algerian did not only have to convince the colonial power, France, that they were able to rule themselves. They also had to fight the European settlers who had been

there for more than 100 years and who did not want to give up their powerful and privileged position.

Like the French government and even some Algerians, the settlers regarded Algeria as a part of France – as a French province. The highest political right in the country was French citizenship and representation in the French parliament in Paris.

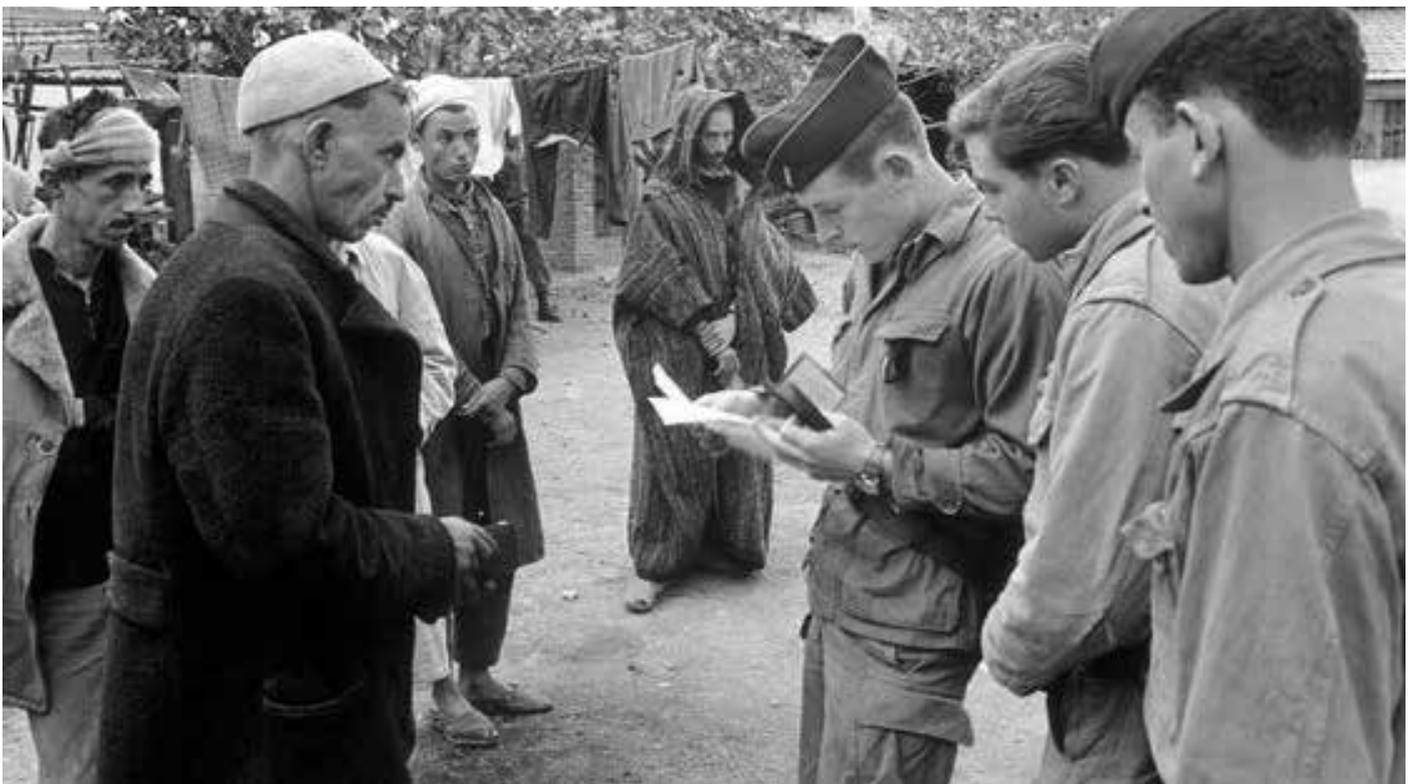
Before World War II, the educated Muslim elite in the cities accepted this. They fought for conditions that would make it easier for them to become assimilated. That is, they tried to get the political rights and other privileges that went with

French citizenship, so as to become part of France.

Early resistance

But more radical ideas were taking hold. Immigrant workers from Algeria met in Paris and formed an organization call the Etoile Nord-Africaine in 1926. It was opposed to all ideas of assimilation and demanded independence.

Influenced at the beginning by the French Communist Party the Etoile then grew in strength. In 1937 it seemed as if the organisation would be banned in Algeria and so its leaders formed a new party: the Party of the Algerian People (PPA).



Algerian rising against France

EVERY struggle for independence has its heroes and in Algeria one of the greatest heroes was a young girl named Jamilah Buhayd. She was known to young people throughout Algeria for her bravery in the face of torture. Yet, although she was an exceptional person, many of her experiences were shared by other women during the Algerian revolution.



For many years before the revolution the women of Algeria had led extremely secluded lives according to Muslim customs. But in responding to the demands of the independence struggle many women radically changed their lives

A few years after the revolution started, the FNL decided that women should participate as militants. Once the women were admitted to the FNL's secret cells nothing held them back.

Stories of young girls conducting heroic missions inspired thousands more to join, breaking free from their traditional seclusion.

Jamilah Buhayd dedicated herself to the struggle only after a close friend

of hers had taken poison rather than allowed herself to be questioned by the French. Jamilah then became one of the many young women sent out on some of the most dangerous missions.

In the early years of the war women were used especially to carry bombs, ammunition and secret documents. If they took off their veils and dressed like French women. They were not suspected by the police.

At times when resistance leaders needed to move through the city streets of Algiers, a young woman would walk 100 meters ahead of them. She carried a suitcase containing all their weapons and documents and warned them of approaching soldiers or police. This was a dramatic change for women who had scarcely ever been beyond their own neighbourhoods before.

Captured

The FNL also used teams of young men and women to bomb the bars and clubs where French soldiers went. It was after such a mission that Jamilah was shot and captured by French soldiers.

When Jamilah was taken prisoner she knew that many women were tortured to death as the authorities tried to get more information about the FNL cells. She was ruthlessly questioned while the doctors tried

to remove bullet fragments from her shoulder.

But the end of 17 days of torture she had still not given any names. She was eventually released in a half-dead condition.

Searches

Eventually the French realised that women were taking active roles in the resistance. They began stopping and searching all the women, whether they looked European or Algerian.

Militants

Many of the women militants then started wearing the veil again. For a while this enabled them to conceal weapons quite easily. But in time the French started using metal detectors, pinning veiled women to a wall while they searched for weapons.

As it became harder for women to continue in these roles, they were often sent out to special FNL camps in the rural areas. There they lived as the men did, accepting any mission given to them.

All this helped to change the way men regarded women in Algeria. They were no longer seen as objects who should be kept in seclusion, unable to think for themselves. They were now respected as brave people who daily risked their lives for the future of their country.

French rule shatter Algeria

ONE hundred and twenty years of French colonial rule shattered traditional Algerian society and was responsible for some of the fiercest resistance the African continent has seen.

From the beginning of the conquest Algerians were pushed off their lands to make room for the colonists. Revolts by the Algerian people led to more land being taken. Eventually this land was sold to the colonists at cheap prices.

From the mid-1870s the Muslim population (and the number of colonists) increased steadily.

Deprived of their land, Algerians turned to the cities for jobs. But in 1911 only 80 000 Algerian Muslims (out of a total of almost 5 million) could find work in industry and commerce.

Despite unemployment and the loss of their land, the Algerian people still had to bear most of the taxation. They were also subjected to a harsh disciplinary code, the *indigenat*.

Under this code all Muslims were required to carry passes. They were imprisoned for offences such as begging, delay in paying taxes or making a journey without having permission from the authorities.

The colonists were always

conscious of their position as a minority outnumbered 10 to 1. They would not consider any steps which would reduce their power. On the other hand the Muslims refused to give up their own culture for that of their “masters”.

Some people were perceptive and saw a dangerous situation developing. “Security? We shall have it,” remarked an Algerian administrator Charles Jomart, “when we cease to exploit the native under the pretext of emancipating and assimilating him.

Said another of the colonists: “The very prosperity enjoyed by a few made them more apprehensive of what was in store.”



Algerian leaders arrested by the French in 1956. Extreme left is Ahmed Ben Bella, later to become Algeria's first president.

THE LONG BLOODY WAR BRINGS LIBERATION

After World War II the Algerian nationalists were split. A new movement, the Friends of the Manifesto demanded more autonomy from France, but the remaining PPA members argued that only complete independence was enough.

Political confrontation came to a head in 1945 when police fired into a large crowd of Algerians protesting against a new system of representation. The riots which followed were brutally repressed: 103 Europeans and 45 000 Algerians (according to the PPA) lost their lives. Anti-French feeling was driven underground for another 10 years.

Violence grows

When it surfaced again in 1954 France faced escalating violence in its North African colonies. This put the French under great pressure because at the same time they were also busy putting down a 'rebellion' in Indo-China. 1954 saw France suffer its heaviest defeat in Vietnam at Dien Bien-Phu.

As a result the French could not cope with the methods used by the nationalists in North Africa. Boycotts, peasant uprisings and guerilla attacks in Morocco and Tunisia eventually forced the French to grant independence to these two territories in 1956.

But in Algeria things were to be different. Together with the settler population, France prepared for a long bloody colonial war which became increasingly violent and shook Algerian society to its roots.

War

November 1954 saw the start of the armed uprising. It was organised secretly by nine militant members of the PPA. Trained soldiers, they were of peasant origin and had no time for the battle of words. All they wanted was to fight for Algeria's complete and immediate independence. Together they eventually formed the Algerian Front for National Liberation (FNL). The uprising spread slowly and faced a massive French military force. But by 1956 the FNL had become well organized. In spite of

the fact that they were using less efficient weapons than the French, their tactics were costing the French a lot in men and money. By 1960 the FNL had brought the huge French army to a standstill.

The French tried many ways to win the war. They carried out big "resettlement" programmes that were designed to destroy the rural support network of the FNL. Many thousands of peasants lost their homes and their lands in this way.

They tortured large numbers of Algerians. Again and again they insisted that Algeria was no nation, never had been a nation and never would be one.

But they lost the war. Even before the ceasefire was signed in 1962, 800 000 settlers left the country. In July 1962 Algeria voted for its independence and the government-in-exile, formed by FNL leaders, took over. Ahmed Ben Bella, who for many years had been a prisoner in France, became Algeria's first president.



REVOLT AGAINST a greedy and brutal regime

WHILE most Africa regained its freedom in the 1960s, three countries – Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau – had to carry their struggle into the next decade.

Despite the “winds of change” blowing over the continent there was no sign from Portugal that it would consider withdrawing from any of her colonies.

The 1950s saw Britain and France moving towards the realisation that decolonisation was only a matter of time. In contrast Portugal created an even closer relationship, if only in name: she abandoned the term “colonies” and called Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau “overseas province”. Portuguese territory now extended into Africa.

Why was the Portuguese government so reluctant to let go? Part of the reason is that Portugal



was among the poorest of all the colonial rulers.

It was itself almost ‘underdeveloped’ and was determined to hold on to its colonial possessions. Products produced in Mozambique, and especially in mineral-rich Angola, gave much-needed support to a weak economy with little international prestige.

The Africans protested against their continued and increased exploitation, but met vicious repression. Strikes, petitions and demonstrations resulted only in the interrogation and imprisonment of those who took part in them.

Although some international

pressure was brought to bear, the Portuguese government paid no attention. Those foreign governments which could have been most influential (such as Britain and the USA) preferred not to plead the cause of the African people. Their alliances with the Portuguese, such as those through NATO, were considered more important.

By the 1960s then, it seemed to the peoples of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau that they are left with only two alternatives: to continue living indefinitely under repressive colonial rule or to use force against Portugal. They chose the latter and armed resistance began – in 1961 in Angola, in 1963 in Guinea-Bissau and in 1964 in Mozambique.



WAR

the only answer to brutal oppression

On September 25 1964 the Mozambican people declared war against Portuguese colonialism and vowed to gain complete independence. Eleven years later, on 24 July 1975, Samora Machel became the first president of a free Mozambique.

In resorting to war the people of Mozambique were taking the only alternative open to them, other than continuing to live under Portuguese colonial rule. Many years of peaceful protest had been brutally repressed by the colonial authorities:

- A series of strikes in 1947, 1956 and 1962 ended only in the arrest, deportation and death of many participants.
- In the early 1950s high school and university students formed political organisations under the cover of social and cultural activities. Many of these organisations were heavily censored or banned; many members detained, interrogated or jailed.
- In the north the Portuguese authorities severely restricted a successful peasant farming co-operative during the 1950s. As a result the members became completely hostile to the authorities and more openly political.

However, on 16 June 1960 the Portuguese killed more than 500 Africans during a peaceful demonstration in a small northern town called Mueda. To many Mozambicans the Massacre of Mueda was a sign that peaceful resistance was futile. Thousands were determined never again to be unarmed in the face of Portuguese repression.

At the time there were three different Mozambican political organisations. Answering calls for unity made by people such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, the three organisations came together in June 1962 they formed the Mozambican Liberation Front (Frelimo) under the leadership of Eduardo Mondlane.

At the first party congress Frelimo defined its aims as being to prepare for war, to launch an education campaign and to establish diplomatic links with other countries and movements.

The first groups of Frelimo soldiers were trained by Algerians who had just won their own independence after

a seven-year struggle. In 1964 Frelimo began the war.

Early military successes led many more people to join the guerilla fighters. Frelimo always knew that it needed the active support of the population if it was going to defeat the Portuguese army. As a result close links were established between Frelimo units and the men and women who had not become soldiers, but who were nevertheless active participants in the war.

Once liberated zones had been established in the north, Frelimo put into practice some of its goals. Democratic village committees, tribunals and armed militias of peasants were formed.

Production was reorganised along co-operative lines: peasants in the villages worked more closely together and different villages co-operated with one another on a larger scale than before.

Frelimo also set up schools and started scholarship funds to send students abroad. The inadequacy of the Portuguese educational system meant that very few Mozambicans were trained and Frelimo took upon itself the task of teaching people to read, write and to speak Portuguese. It considered it essential to run an educational programme side by side with the military programme.

Medical services were introduced into the liberated zones and the social and cultural developments of the communities was promoted. According to Mondlane, it was especially the women militants who took the chances offered by Frelimo to reorganise their lives.

It was in these different ways that Frelimo laid the foundations for a new Mozambique, even while the war was still in progress. The movement consciously attacked tribalism, racism, religious intolerance and privilege, it set out to demonstrate how new democratic political and economic structures could work.

When independence was won in 1975, Mozambique was well on its way to burying the remains of the colonial heritage.



Women had a vital role in Mozambique's new society

MOZAMBIQUE'S struggle for freedom was committed to the elimination of all forms of oppression – and that included the oppression experienced by women.

“Generally speaking,” Samora Machel has pointed out, “women are the most oppressed, humiliated and exploited beings in society. A woman is even exploited by the man who is crushed under the boot of the boss and the settler.”

From the earliest day of the liberation struggle the Frelimo leaders stressed the need to change all exploitative relationships. They saw that women had a vital role to play in the war as well as in building a new society.

Two years after the war started Frelimo created a Women's Detachment. The women involved were given full military training as well as political training. After this they could choose whether to enter the fighting or to concentrate on political work.

“When we girls started to work,” said one woman, “there was strong opposition to our participation. Because that was the tradition.

“We then started a big campaign explaining why we also had to fight... We insisted on our having military training and being given weapons.

“I was in the first Women's Detachment,” she said. “We have been very active fighting, transporting material to the advance zones, organising production and participating in the health services.”

It was through activities such as crop production and health services that the woman started putting Frelimo's ideas into practice. In the liberated zones they worked hard to show how society could be changed to end exploitation.

They learned to speak at public meetings and to take an active part in politics. In some villages the sight of armed women speaking to a large audience astonished the men and led many of them to join the army.

In the liberated zones equality was of greatest importance. No discrimination was allowed – whether against women or against people of particular tribal backgrounds. Men and women worked side by side in newly established bush schools, hospitals and child care centres.

Life was dangerous. Although few Portuguese soldiers could reach villages on the ground, they bombed them from the air. Many women served in units which guarded the villages against such surprise attacks.

But still it was difficult for many people to change their old views about women. While many women in the army were quite equal to men, it was clear that in most communities the work of changing people's attitudes would have to continue long after the war.

In order to do this, the Organisation of Mozambique Women (OMM) was formed in 1972. At first much of its work had to do with changing people's attitudes to women. After the war the OMM organised weekly discussion groups in villages throughout the country.

In more recent years the OMM has also watched over the position of women in the new Mozambique. It has been concerned that women should not be left out of participating in government and in the professions.

Frelimo leaders stressed the need to change all exploitive relationships. They saw that women had a vital role to play in the war as well as in building a new society.



PATRIOTIC FRONT united in struggle

RECENT newspaper reports seem to indicate that there is apparent tension between the supporters of the Zimbabwe Africa National Union (Zanu) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (Zapu). The two groups together formed an alliance call the Patriotic Front.

As a united force, both on the battlefield and around the negotiating table, the PF fought successfully for the liberation of Zimbabwe.

Robert Mugabe, now Prime Minister of Zimbabwe is president of Zanu while Zapu is led by Joshua Nkomo who is now Minister of Home Affairs in Zimbabwe.

During the long bitter war of liberation Zanu and Zapu fielded separate guerilla armies to fight against the Smith regime.

In 1976, the Presidents of the frontline states of Botswana, Angola, Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania held a meeting in Dar es Salaam. At this meeting the

Presidents felt that if the war of liberation was to succeed in Rhodesia, there had to be unity among the guerilla forces.

An earlier attempt to unify the forces was proving unsuccessful with some of the members withdrawing their support from the agreement to fight together. This break-down in unity made the Presidents of the frontline states put pressure on Zanu and Zapu to form an alliance. The Zanu and Zapu alliance was called the Patriotic Front.

At the Geneva Conference in December 1976 Zanu and Zapu took part in the negotiations as the Patriotic Front. From then on until the Lancaster House talks in September 1979 they worked as one both on the battle field and at the negotiating table.

At the elections in March this year Mugabe became the first Prime Minister of independent Zimbabwe, and Nkomo is the Minister of Home Affairs.

The liberation struggle in Zimbabwe has a long and chequered history.

UNITY AND STRUGGLE WINS POWER FOR PATRIOTIC FRONT

After UDI, the nationalist movement in Rhodesia began to take a different course. Both Zapu and Zanu turned to tactics of armed struggle. Between 1966 and 1968 several groups of armed men entered the country from Zambia. However, these first attempts at armed struggle were a failure. The people inside the country had not been prepared for such a war. Most of the men were either captured or killed by the Rhodesian troops.

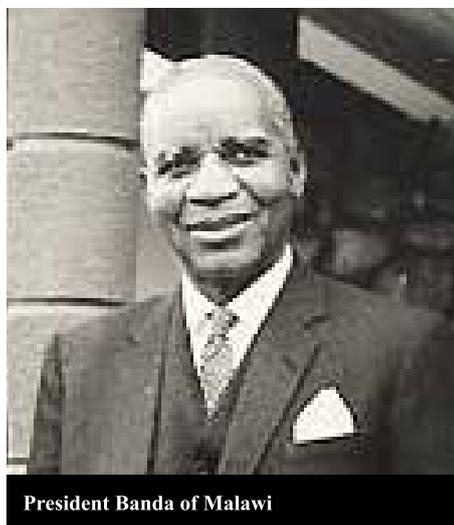
This failure led to serious conflict among the leadership in exile and also a loss of morale among the fighting men. The strategy was changed. From 1972 more effective guerilla tactics were adopted.

Disputes continue

Still, the exiled leadership of ZANU and ZAPU were continuing their disputes in Zambia. Their disagreements had now become more serious.

Two of the main problems appeared to be tribalism and the degree of co-operation with Zambia, South Africa, and the Rhodesian government.

People in the liberation movements became suspicious of one another over the foreign policy



President Banda of Malawi

of the Zambian government at this stage. This was the time of “dialogue”, or “detente,” It seemed to many Rhodesian nationalists that President Kaunda wanted to negotiate a settlement with Smith and Vorster.

Radicals, especially in ZANU, began to suspect a sell-out. Quarrelling and fighting broke out. Herbert Chitepo, one of the leading supporters of armed struggle, was killed in 1975. It has not yet been established who was responsible.

However, while the leadership quarrelled in Zambia, the war developed inside Rhodesia. The guerilla fighting grew more into a revolutionary people’s war.

While the exile ZANU and ZAPU leadership was disunited in Zambia, the Smith regime appeared strong and victorious. But by 1975, Mozambique, now independent, began to influence young militants in the base camps. By 1976, Mozambique and Tanzania gave these militants active aid. Thus, many guerillas, especially of Zanu, regrouped in Mozambique. They were now more numerous, militants and radical than they had been under Sithole.

Robert Mugabe, elected president of ZANU while in detention in Rhodesia emerged as their spokesman.



Dr. Kenneth Kaunda - President of Zambia at Independence in 1964.

Late in 1976, the new ZANU and ZAPU agreed to a loose alliance – the Patriotic Front. The war intensified rapidly. Smith came under great pressure from South Africa, the USA and Britain to agree to majority rule in Rhodesia. Reluctantly he announced to his electorate that majority rule would come in two years.

Still, it was only after four years that elections for a democratic government could be held in Rhodesia. The Smith regime had tried everything to exclude the PF. They made efforts to achieve a settlement with the far more moderate UANC under Bishop Muzorewa and the remaining ZANU under Sithole. But all these efforts failed. Early in 1980 a cease fire agreement was reached.

In the same year elections were held. These turned out to be a great triumph for the PF. Out of 80 Seats the PF won 77. Unity and struggle at last won freedom for the people of Zimbabwe.

African nationalists fight colonials – partnership does NOT mean partisanship!

CENTRAL AFRICA

After World War II colonial powers began to loosen their grip all over Africa. In Central Africa – Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe – Independence developments similar to those in many parts of Africa, could be observed. But there were many important differences.

- In Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), the development of the Copperbelt had attracted many European settlers. These white workers wanted to maintain their high standard of living whilst the African workers lived in conditions of poverty.
- Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) had been a “self-governing territory” since 1923. The settlers here were many and well organised. They wanted to increase their power as much as possible.
- Nyasaland, as Malawi was called then, only had a small number of Europeans. Most Africans produced crops for export. Many also became migrant workers in industrial areas like the Copperbelt, the Rand or the Southern Rhodesian gold mines

African nationalist movements in Nyasaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesia grew more powerful, especially after World War II. They pressed for constitutional change. But it was mainly over the issue of federation that these movements were shaped. The opposition to the formation of the federation was particularly strong in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

The federation

As the time of direct colonial domination drew to a close all over Africa the European settlers felt threatened by these changes, particularly in Southern Rhodesia. They proposed a plan for a Central African Federation of the two colonies to the British Parliament.

They presented their scheme as a “partnership” of white and black. African nationalist leaders, particularly in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were totally opposed to this scheme.

They feared that instead of being ruled directly by Britain, they would now come under direct domination by the settlers – especially the Southern Rhodesian settlers.

However, despite strong opposition, a federal government for all three colonies was established in 1953. Nyasaland was included on the insistence of Britain.

Nationalist leaders’ fears were soon confirmed. All major development in the region took place in Southern Rhodesia even though most of the money had been raised mainly in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. The civil service was also dominated by Southern Rhodesian settlers. The “partnership” was indeed turning out as the then Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, Sir Godfrey Huggins had described it to the British Parliament.

It was a “partnership between a horse and its rider, with the white man as the rider”

Frustrated by what the “politics of partnership” looked like, militant leaders of the nationalist movements organized and gained mass support against the Federation.

In Nyasaland, Dr Hastings Banda was asked to return home to lead the Nyasaland African Congress. Large demonstrations, riots and strikes in the three colonies led the British to declare a state of emergency in 1959. In addition, the formation of a better organized and more outspoken Zambian ANC in the mid-fifties contributed to the break up of Federation in 1963.

After this, Britain began to “decolonise” and transfer power to the nationalist leaders. Thus, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia achieved independence in 1964.

ZIMBABWE

a long and bitter war for FREEDOM

Once Malawi and Zambia had been granted independence in 1964, nationalist leaders and politicians in Southern Rhodesia expected the same thing to happen in Southern Rhodesia. However, the European settlers resisted any move towards the granting of independence to Southern Rhodesia.

As a result, the people of Zimbabwe had to put up a very hard and long bitter struggle against the settler regime to win their independence.

It seems Southern Rhodesian Africans had at first welcomed the idea of Federation. They had hoped that the “partnership” would better the lot of the African people in Southern Rhodesia.

But once they became frustrated with “partnership” many Africans joined the Rhodesian ANC which was formed by Joshua Nkomo in 1957.

Anti-colonial protest gained the Rhodesian ANC (SRANC) mass support. When it was banned in 1959 after outbreaks of political violence, the National Democratic Party (NDP) was formed to take its place. The banning of the SRANC had disillusioned Africans even more with the federation and, as a result, more joined the newly formed NDP.

The NDP began to seek the support of some British government ministers. They hoped that Britain would force constitutional reforms on the settler government. But the Constitutional Conference held in 1961 offered only vague possibility of majority rule in the far distant future. The NDP rejected the proposals from this conference.

In 1962 the rightist Rhodesian Front Party came into power. The Rhodesian Front was dedicated to preserving “white rule in Rhodesia”

It soon became clear to the NDP that peaceful protest methods would not force the Rhodesian government to make any basic changes.

The nationalists now, for the first time, turned to, organised political violence. They tried to create a breakdown of “law and order.” They thought that the British government would intervene militarily and stop the settlers from taking complete control of the country.

This approach did not work at all. Instead, the settlers became more confident and better organized. In 1965 the Rhodesian Front then under Ian Smith unilaterally declared Rhodesia an independent country. UDI – Unilateral Declaration of Independence.

In the meantime, the NDP had been banned and re-formed as the ZAPU Zimbabwe African People’s Union under Joshua Nkomo. But by that time, differences over policy and tactics had led to the formation of the ZANU Zimbabwe African national Union, under Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole. Both parties were banned in 1964.



INDEPENDENCE IN AFRICA

WHO BENEFITS the leaders, people or the West?

AFRICA OF THE 1960S greeted freedom with rejoicing and festivity. As the flags of the colonial rulers came down the future seemed bright: Africans would now govern themselves as they chose.

But 20 years later things were less clear. “We are the victims of mass exploitation,” declared Nigerian President Shebu Shagari to the OAU Economic Summit in April 1980.

“The second phase of the struggle for independence – economic independence – must now begin,” he said.

What then had gone wrong with the dreams of independence? Why were many African countries less prosperous or self-reliant than they had hoped they would be?

Part of the reason is that although the colonial rulers eventually withdrew from the African continent, giving up political control, they would not give up their economic interests. They still wanted Africa’s raw materials at low prices, and still needed markets for the goods which they produced in the Western world.

Colonialism was thus replaced with neo-colonialism – a relationship in which the rich countries and the former colonies participated as political equals, but in which the rich countries dominated in every other way: in wealth, military and economic strength and technological skill.

Some African leaders were aware that political



Poverty and hunger haunt Africa. Yet her resources are sent to the rich nations of the world. Here Angolan women are seen working hard to get the quota of fish for the day sorted, ready for export.

independence was only part of total decolonisation. As early as 1961 the Third All African Peoples Conference declared that “neo-colonialism... is the greatest threat to African countries that have newly won their independence.” They warned that newly independent countries would become “the victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical means.”

And in 1968 Julius Nyerere, President of Tanzania, described Africa’s struggle in this way: “Colonialism of the traditional kind has now been virtually defeated . . . political independence has been won everywhere.

“The struggle which remains is a struggle to make that independence meaningful – to make the independence of the people and not a mere matter of flag, and Presidents, and protocol, while the masses continue to be exploited either by their old masters or by new ones.”

What is neo-colonialism and how has it increased Africa’s poverty and dependence?

AFRICA'S INTERNATIONAL LINKS

Many of Africa's problems today come from the close links between Africa and the countries of Europe and North America.

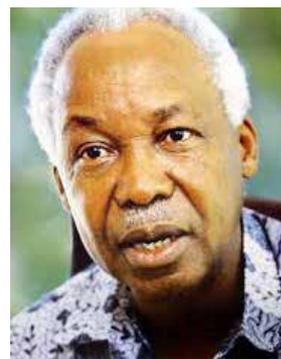
These links are mainly of trade, but also of aid given to Africa by the wealthy countries.

International trade is important in the modern world. However, the kinds of international trade links that exist between Africa and countries of Europe and North America reinforce economic dependence. So we find in most African countries:

- A greater amount of exports compared to national production. Most of the exports are products of unskilled labour and/or mineral resources (e.g

cocoa, coffee, cotton, copper, chrome etc.)

- A greater amount of imports compared to national products. Most of the imports are consumer goods (motor cars, food, etc) or capital goods (machinery).
- A high level of foreign investments.
- Foreign investments are overseas aid concentrated on



Nyerere, President of Tanzania "The struggle which remains is to make it the independence of the people."

helping the export market rather than the national market.

- Very small and inadequate amounts of locally available capital.
- Limited technical and managerial skills.

AFRICA – factory and gardener of the Western world

THE colonial powers used much of the land of Africa to grow cocoa, coffee, tea, sugar, peanuts and cotton for the people of Europe. After independence, this land was still growing the same crops for Europe. Let us look at why this is so, and what it means for the people of Africa.

Crops like cocoa, coffee, tea and cotton are grown for export. Very little of these crops are used by the people of Africa. Some people say this is the best way to use the land, because such crops bring in money from Europe. This money can then help to make the African country wealthy. But this has not happened. Why?

The transnationals

In Europe and America there are big companies that buy these crops. These companies operate in many parts of the world. They are called transnational companies.

The American and European transnationals control the prices that they pay for the crops. This is because there are many different places in the world where such crops are grown. So if a farmer

in Ivory Coast wants to raise the price of his coffee, the transitional company simply refuses to buy.

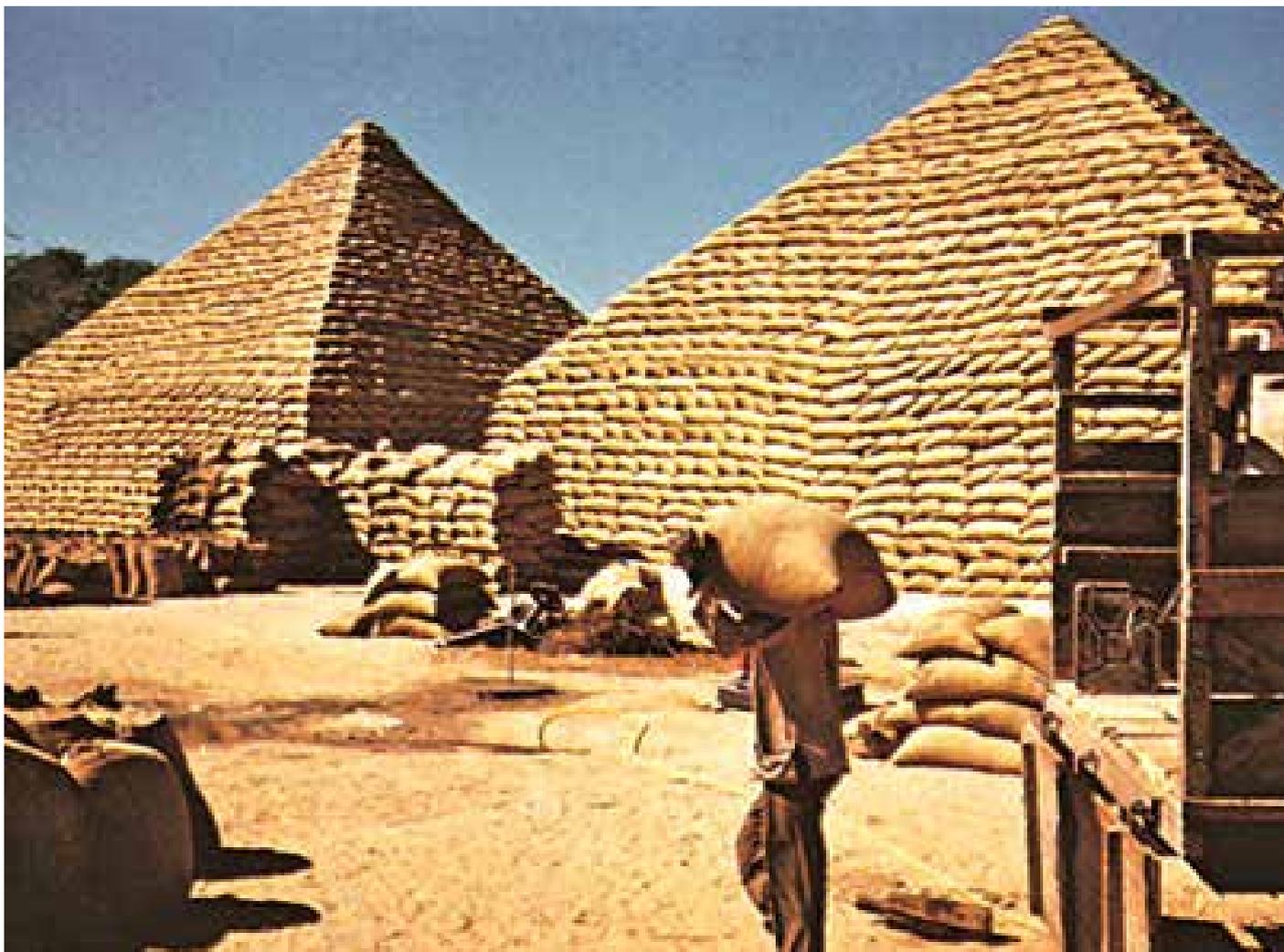
It will buy its coffee elsewhere. The farmer will then be unable to sell his crop, because there are no other buyers. For example, one single company buys almost all the coffee that the Ivory Coast grows. So the farmer is forced to sell his crop at the price demanded by the company.

The transnational companies pack, ship and process these crops. They also pack, ship and process crops from all over the world. Then, in the supermarkets of Europe and America they can sell the product at a very high price. The European customer pays R2 for a tin of coffee. Of this money, the Ivory Coast will get only 30c. The other R1, 70 stays with the transnational coffee company.

So much of the land in Africa grows crops for the people of Europe. There is not enough land left over to grow the food that the people of Africa need. As a result, there is overcrowding of agricultural land, migration to the urban area and sometimes poverty.

To meet the food needs of their people the governments of Africa are forced to import food. They import food such as millet and wheat from America. In America there is a huge surplus of such food. So the American farmers become wealthy.

This is an example of the strange things that happen in Africa because of the links with Europe. In many of the independent countries of Africa one cannot yet say that the land belongs to the people of Africa. They are prisoners of their own land.



Labourers for the transnationals of Europe and America stacking up peanuts for export (Nigeria). With the exit of colonialism foreign powers with economic investments in Africa continued their exploitation through “neo-colonialism.”

The circle of economic dependence still continues in Africa.

AFRICAN countries sell America and Europe raw materials like coffee, cocoa, tea and cotton as well as copper, chrome and iron and other minerals. Raw materials like these have to be processed in factories before people can use them. For example, iron must be made into steel. These factories are not in Africa.

The African countries feed the factories of the West. The African countries do not control the prices at which they can sell these raw materials. The prices are controlled in Europe and America.

In return, Africa buys manufactured goods from Europe and America. It buys steel, bicycles, machinery, tools, radios and telephones from the factories of the West. Often it buys its food and clothes from these factories too. And again, it is not the countries of Africa that control the prices of these manufactured goods. It is the owners of the factories in Europe and America who set the price.

Africa sells its materials at a low price, and buys its goods at a high price. The circle of economic dependence continues: Europe and America always getting the better deal – and Africa paying the price.

THE CONFRONTATION OF CONTINENTS

Africa vows to erase economic dependence



Copper-nickel mining at Selebi-Pikwe (Botswana) for shipment to the United States, where it will be refined.

After gaining independence the new leaders of Africa faced a difficult situation:

- **Their countries were poor because of colonial exploitation.**
- **Their countries had been developed to benefit the colonial powers.**

Faced with these problems of development and the desire to meet the need of the people, many leaders of Africa were forced to accept aid and investment from the big countries of America and Europe. Very often the investments was from the powerful transnationals.

So they were forced to invite the transnationals into their countries. But the companies and governments of Europe and America were primarily interested in profits. While some investment helped develop the national economy of some African states, foreign investment mainly aided the development of certain kinds of industries and agriculture.

These industries and agricultural projects were always concerned with exports.

While in some countries the

leaders gave up the struggle for real development of their countries, in other countries the leaders continued the struggle for real development. Men like President Kaunda of Zambia and President Nyerere of Tanzania fight against corruption and they do not seek wealth for themselves. But still their countries remain poor. They have not solved the problem of the transnational company.

In countries like Angola and Mozambique, the leaders know very well the dangers of dealing with the transnationals. But their countries cannot develop at all without the wealth, knowledge and skills of these companies. So in Angola an American company still mines the oil.

But the leaders of countries like Mozambique, Angola and Algeria demand that the foreign companies

share their profits with the people of Africa.

It is clear that for the new rulers of Africa there is no easy way out. Even when they do not wish to, they are often forced to help the foreign transnationals to exploit their people.

The African countries have inherited this situation from the colonial period. After Africa won her independence from colonial rule, the foreign powers and companies had to find new ways of continuing their economic exploitation.

This new form of exploitation, the child of colonialism is call neo-colonialism. In their struggle for real development the new ruling classes of Africa have to struggle against new-colonialism. Some are more successful than others.

Leaders try to direct economic profit to benefit their people

In July 1974 government representatives of four countries - Chile, Peru, Zaire and Zambia met in Lusaka to discuss these questions:

How could they, as copper exporting countries, capture the surplus profits (investible surpluses) produced by their mines? How could they direct these profits to rebuilding their economies so as to increase productive employment opportunities and raise the living standards of their people?

All four countries shared common problems:

- *they were all dependent on copper production*
- *copper was their major export*
- *the copper mines had been developed by a handful of Transnational companies (Kennecoth, Roan Selection Trust and Union Miniere.*
- *the internal development of their countries was centred around the copper mining industry, and, as a result, the development of other sectors were neglected.*

Neo-colonialism and export dependency

Like the copper producing countries of Zambia and Zaire, many African countries depend on a single product for most of their wealth. During the colonial period development centred around the chief export. This trend continued after independence. The bulk of the new investments and foreign aid inevitably ended up in support of the chief export.

Today Africa lives with the results of the one-sided, economically dependent development. This pattern of development was established by foreign companies and foreign governments.

Effects of neo-colonialism

Neo-colonialism, as explained, continued the pattern of economic dependence. African states, although politically free, were still dependent on the transnationals and the governments of Europe and the United States.



Goods on display at the market in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. While the markets of Africa shrink, the purses of the West grow bigger. Yet Africa depends on the West for a great many products and commodities.

While attempting further development of their national economies, African states grew more and more dependent. More foreign owned factories were built, more foreign investment arrived; more foreign aid poured in. And yet Africa became poorer instead of growing rich.

One sided development

There can be little doubt that foreign aid and investment by transnationals in Africa brought in badly needed capital. The question

to ask is: In what way did the capital aid the full development of the country and the people?

While factories were built, mining operations extended and new farms developed, much of the benefit of these new industries were restricted to a small portion of the nation.

Rural poverty, unemployment and underemployment increased. Food production, especially in the basic foods, decreased. And while the many grew poor, the few grew rich.

A third way for the Third World – **UJAMAA...**

TANZANIA – THE COUNTRY

Only 10% of the population lives in towns like Dar es Salaam, Dodoma and Arusha. Most of these people work as clerks and civil servants. Many of the townspeople are workers on the docks in ports like Tanka, Mtwana and Dar es Salaam.

There is also a large group of people who come to the towns and cannot find work. This is a big problem which causes much worry for the governments of Tanzania.

Tanzania is a large country, almost as big as South Africa. It is on the east coast of Africa between Kenya and Mozambique.

The population of Tanzania is about 16-million people. About 90% of the population lives in villages in the countryside. Most of the people are farmers who grow enough food to feed themselves.

There is a small group of wealthy farmers who earn a living by growing crops which they sell on the market.

These are called cash crops.

Economy

Agriculture is the main economic activity in Tanzania. Although the country has a problem of low rainfall, there are many farming areas where food crops like mealies, rice, wheat and beans can grow well. The people also herd cattle, sheep and goats.

There are some wealthy areas in Tanzania. Here the farmers grow crops for export. There are crops, like sisal (used to make rope), cotton, coffee and tea. Two thirds of the government's money comes from the export of these cash crops.

There is also a little mining and industry in Tanzania. The country used to mine some of the best diamonds in the world but now these are almost finished. There are large deposits of iron ore and coal

in the south west of the country but these are not being mined yet. Tanzania also has some cement, textile, timber and paper factories

History

This part of Africa has a long history. There were well organised civilisations in the area over 800 years ago. At this time the area that is known as Tanzania was an important and wealthy trading area. In the 19th century the stability of the area was broken by outside interference.

In the second half of the century, as in so many parts of Africa, European powers began interfering. In 1891 Germany established its rule over the country. When Germany was defeated in the First World War the country was taken over by the British and they called

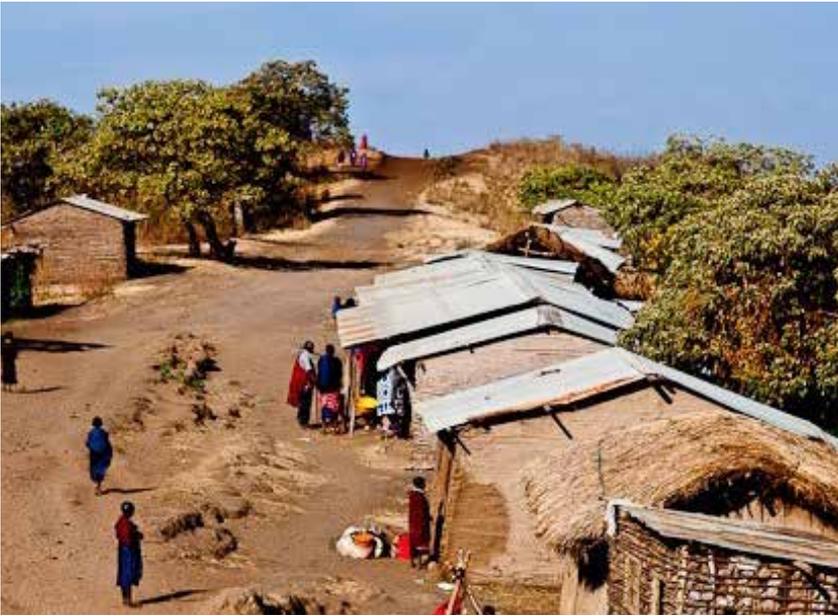
it Tanganyika.

Liberation

In 1954 the African people formed the Tanganyika National Union (TANU) to fight for independence. In 1961 they were successful and won independence. TANU under the leadership of Julius Nyerere formed the first government. In 1963 the country became a republic with Nyerere as its first President. In the meantime, Zanzibar, an island near Tanganyika also became independent of British rule. In 1964 the two countries came together to form the united Republic of Tanzania.

Since then Tanzania has followed a social policy which many see as an important example of African socialism.

COUNTRY



The fastest growing cities in the world are all in Third World. In Tanzania plans are being made to redirect the rapid development and growth of cities like Dar es Salaam to smaller towns and villages.

TOWNS



A view of Dar es Salaam's town centre and busy harbour, showing the deep water berths, now being extended, and, in the distance, the oil refinery.

The key theorist of "African Socialism" President Nyerere of Tanzania's, dream was to avert class formation and the accumulation of wealth in the pockets of a few. He also aimed at redirecting development from the urban to the rural areas.

To do this, he preached self-reliance and national self-awareness. This was built on a fierce independence of all Superpowers and around the praise-worthy ideology "Ujamaa Swahili for familihood."

Ujamaa becomes the hope of Africa and 'basis of African Socialism'

Ever since Tanu came to power President Nyerere has wanted to put a policy of socialism into practice. Socialism has been defined as an economic and political system in which there is equal sharing of the country's wealth.

Nyerere's ideas

At the time of independence the President wrote a pamphlet call "Ujaama – The Basis of African Socialism". In this pamphlet he wrote about his ideas on how to operate the economy of the new nation.

The word "Ujaama" means family hood or togetherness. According to Nyerere, in traditional African society the people lived according to the idea of "Ujaama" This meant that the people always cooperated and helped each other. The wealth of the community was always shared fairly. The old and the poor were always secure because they knew the community would look after them.

President of Tanzania and “Mwalimu” (Teacher) to his people - Julius Nyerere, seen here with his Cabinet members digging a trench for water pipes in an Ujamaa village.



The emergence of AFRICAN SOCIALISM



Tanzanian women working together on a collective farming project in Kwa Mkono Village. Because of the two-fold government policy for rural development - “Villagisation” and “Ujaama”, they were brought together from different scattered rural communities into this larger village. Ujamaa entails villagers working co-operating and sharing proceeds.

As the winds of independence swept across the African continent, another word was heard – African Socialism. It was on the lips of many African leaders, announced as the solution to Africa’s problems.

African socialism was supposed to change society. Poverty and exploitation were to be eradicated. For many African leaders, socialism remained a word.

Poverty and exploitation continued in their countries after independence. Lip service was paid to the idea of socialism.

Sharing

African socialism was based on the ideas of co-operativeness and sharing of the village. African socialists believed that it would be easy to change African societies to socialism because of the spirit of sharing that existed in the villages. And through co-operation and sharing, African socialists felt that the problem of poverty and exploitation would be removed.

The practical situation of the economic state of African societies showed that African socialism would not work. Poverty and exploitation could not be overcome

only by co-operation, sharing and hard work. Problems like new-colonialism and the role of the transnationals would have to be solved. The roots of the problems of poverty and exploitation went far deeper.

This week we will look in detail how Tanzania tackled the issue of socialism.



The choice between prolonged oppression and temporary poverty

President Nyerere says the socialist ideals are “a society in which all members have equal rights and equal opportunities.”

HAS AFRICAN SOCIALISM WORKED IN TANZANIA?

In 1967 Nyerere announced the new policy of Ujamaa villages. Ujamaa is the Swahili word for “togetherness”. In his Arusha Declaration Nyerere said that all peasants must be helped to come together and co-operate. Besides working on his own private plot, everyone must also work in a communal village field. The crop from this field would be a surplus for the whole village.

With the money from selling the surplus they could improve the farming and living conditions in the village. Nyerere hoped to change the quality of life for the peasants through Ujamaa.

Each Ujamaa village would have a school, a medical clinic, water supplies and a tractor. The people in much of Tanzania lived far apart, in small groups or on family farms. The government was too poor to supply them all with these services. If the people moved together in Ujamaa villages it would be easier for the government to supply them.

But only a few peasants formed Ujamaa villages after the Arusha declaration. Why?

One problem was that there was very little attempt to explain to the peasants what Ujamaa was. No-one

explained what the advantages of working together could be. The attitude of some of the government officials who were meant to advise and help the peasants was negative.

More often than not the richer farmers benefited from this scheme. So most peasants saw no advantage in joining the Ujamaa Villages.

In 1970 the government started to force the reluctant people into villages. By 1976 all 13 million of Tanzania’s rural population was in villages.

There are some good results. A quarter of these villages have piped water supplies. Half have medical dispensaries. And almost all children are taught to read and write at least.

While Tanzania has succeeded in getting most of its rural population into villages, it cannot be said that it has succeeded in creating a socialist country.

What has gone wrong?

Some of the government employees, officials, and advisers do not want Ujamaa. They want to protect their privileges and salaries.

- The rich peasants compete to increase their wealth. They co-operate with the government so they can get benefits, for themselves. They block off the poor peasants.



The greatest resource of Tanzania - her children. Almost half the Tanzanian population is under 15 years old. Kids help make bricks to build their school.

- Very few officials encourage the peasants to organize themselves to struggle for Ujamaa.

In battling to establish a socialist society in Tanzania, President Nyerere and TANU have had to fight on two fronts. Internally there were those who refused to accept the principles of socialism.

Externally, Tanzania had to face foreign investment, foreign aid and the transnationals. President Nyerere explains; “How can we depend upon foreign governments and companies for the major part of our development without giving to those governments and companies a greater part of our freedom to act as we please?”

In the battle to establish socialism, the people of Zanzibar and Tanzania have created a new party – CHAMA CHA MAPINDUZI. This new party reaffirms Tanzania’s commitment to socialism.

There can be very little doubt that Tanzania’s path to socialism is and will be a difficult one. But as President Nyerere replied when asked why Tanzania was not yet a socialist state - he said:

“If we say we are going to the new Jerusalem, our friends should not be surprised to find us still in the desert.”

People of MAPUTO unite to form a new society

SOCIALISM IN AFRICA

“There is no point to our struggle if our only goal is to throw out the Portuguese. We are trying to drive them out, but we are also struggling to end the exploitation of our people both by whites and by blacks” Amilcar Cabral.

Last week we looked at Tanzania’s attempt at building socialism.

We also saw the many problems that faced these attempts. Many difficulties exist for those countries that have chosen socialism – the problems of the transnationals, the need for development, the great needs of the people. Yet there are countries in Africa like Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Algeria, Ethiopia, Somalia and now Zimbabwe – that have turned to socialism as a solution to their problems of poverty and exploitation.

This week Learning Post looks at Mozambique. In 1975 the three Portuguese colonies in Africa won their freedom after 300 years of colonialism. They won after a guerilla war of 10 years. The liberation movements of these three countries – PAIGC in Guinea Bissau, MPLA in Angola, and FRELIMO in Mozambique - all chose the path of socialism. It is along path with many problems. As Amilcar Cabral said: “When we are independent, that is when our struggle really begins.”

Introduction to Mozambique

Mozambique came to freedom in 1975 with huge problems. At independence there were these problems:

- most of the Portuguese settlers fled to Portugal. The country almost came to a standstill, because it was the Portuguese colonists who had the skills and education.
- when they fled they took as much wealth as possible. For example: they took 25 000 cars and trucks so Mozambique had severe transport problems.
- many of the Portuguese destroyed what they could not take with them, They destroyed factory machinery and farm machinery.
- 50% of the land was big plantations where Portuguese had farmed tea, sisal and cashews for export to Europe.
- the majority of the population were desperately poor peasants crowded on bad soil.

Other problems were: nine out of ten people could not read or write, there was no medical care in the countryside, and many people lived in huts in slums around the cities.

How did Frelimo tackle these vast problems?

In 1977 the people of Mozambique

voted for the first time in elections. Each village or area elected local Popular Assemblies. District and provincial assemblies were also elected, and finally, the National People’s Assembly which makes the laws. So, for the first time since the Portuguese conquest in 1505, democracy began in Mozambique.

Democracy is also organised in other ways. Workers on plantations and factories elect committees to organize the work. Neighbourhoods also elect committees to discuss their needs.

Tribalism

FRELIMO knows that tribalism can destroy a country as it destroyed Nigeria and Uganda. Because the leaders of Mozambique are not trying to improve their own wealth and position, they do not appeal to tribal groups. The different groups do not come to hate each other, because they do not compete with each other for wealth and development. Rather, all the people of Mozambique are encouraged to work together.

As Samora Machel says, “If I am a Nianja and cultivate the land alongside an Ngoni, I sweat with him, wrest life from the soil with



him, with him I am destroying tribal efforts, and I feel united with him. With him I am destroying all that divide us.” So new foundations are being built for a new society.

Women

In colonial Mozambique the position of women was often one of inferiority and exploitation. Samora Machel described the position of woman in colonial Mozambique as: “Women are the most oppressed, humiliated and exploited beings in society. A woman is even exploited by man who is himself exploited, beaten by the man who is lacerated by the sjambok, humiliated by the man who is crushed beneath the boot of the boss and settler.”

FRELIMO considers the role of women as being equally important in new Mozambique. In this extract Kumba Kolubali, a village woman in Guinea Bissau, describes the change in her life as a result of changes introduced: “The difference between my life as a woman in Guinea Bissau, describes the change in her life as a result of changes introduced: “The difference between my life as a woman before and my life now is very, very big. How could I have ever thought that it would be possible for me to be vice-head of a village council one day? Before this was always man’s work. Life is so much better for women now. “I sit here at this moment and men are nearby. They have listened to what I have said and they have accepted it. Before it would not even have been possible for a woman to sit and listen. Before, men and women could not work together doing the same work. The men had this idea that women must work for the men. Not anymore. Now the men and the women work together.”

The struggle with problems: Education

Quote: “We must turn the country into a school where everyone learns and everyone teaches.”

One of the biggest problems

of independent Mozambique is education. FRELIMO wants everyone to be educated to help build a new society. Instead of some people being well educated and others having no education at all, FRELIMO states that all the people should learn how to read and write. The people can use their education to understand how they can work together and improve their living.

Under colonial Mozambique, education was for the favoured few. Nine out of ten adults were illiterate. So FRELIMO has organised huge literacy programmes to try to reach as many people as possible. Last year 250 000 people attended these literacy classes.

The classes take place at factories after work, and at farms and villages in the evenings. There are not nearly enough teachers so even those with only two years of school teach those with none. School pupils teach grown-ups. This makes problems, because many such teachers do not have enough skills or experience really to help others. But everyone is constantly learning from mistakes.

FRELIMO also wishes to have all children at school. It is an ambitious aim, because the Portuguese built very few schools during their rule. But the people are determined. Even when there are no school buildings, classes are held in the open under the trees. In addition to providing literacy, Mozambique also needs highly skilled and educated people to run the country. Education is therefore seen not as a tool for individual aspiration. Education is provided for the development of the country. People are educated and trained not to better themselves financially but to improve the development of the country.

Socialist villages

In Mozambique the village schemes like the Ujaama village of Tanzania

were introduced. The people now work together instead of being scattered around the countryside.

During the long war against the Portuguese, the FRELIMO learnt that it needed the support of the peasants. So, after liberation, FRELIMO introduced the idea of socialist villages. Many FRELIMO members lived with the peasants and explained and discussed with them.

In the socialist villages the people work together to clear fields and build roads, schools and houses. They elect committees to plan farming and organize education and health. The income is divided equally, and a certain amount is used to buy more farm equipment.

There are many problems. There is a shortage of trained experts and equipment. Because the Portuguese took so many trucks transport is difficult. Often good food goes rotten because it cannot get to the hungry people in the city. But together the people struggle to improve their lives.

Other problems

There are other problems. Terrible floods and storms have destroyed many crops. There is also a different kind of problem. Some people in Mozambique do not share the ideas of FRELIMO. They did not take part with FRELIMO in the war of liberation. They only want to improve their own position and wealth. Some of these men are government officials because they are educated. In such positions they attempt to frustrate the efforts of FRELIMO.

Corruption and inefficient bureaucracy causes many problems. Through education and hard work FRELIMO seeks to control these. So in a poor country like Mozambique the people have a great struggle in throwing off colonialism and neo-colonialism. But the Mozambicans are struggling to build a new society.

THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY



THE SEARCH FOR UNITY

In July of this year the Heads of African states met in Freetown, Sierra Leone for the 17th summit of the Organisation of African Unity. It was created in May 1967 at Addis Ababa by 32 independent African countries.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) adopted the following aims:

- The promotion of unity and solidarity of African states
- The co-ordination and intensification of the African states' efforts to achieve a better life for the people of Africa,
- The defence of territorial integrity and independence.
- The eradication of all forms of colonialism from Africa.
- The promotion of international co-operation.

Seventeen years later, the OAU is still far from achieving many of its aims. Africa is still divided.

The transnational companies of the West still exploit Africa's resources to their benefit. And the hope for a better life still escapes many peoples of Africa.

Why has the search for unity been so difficult to achieve? Almost from the time it was created the members of the OAU were divided on the important issue

of unity. Countries like Ghana, Algeria, Guinea, Mali, Morocco and Egypt believed that real unity could only be achieved if the artificial boundaries created by the colonialists were abolished. Many other African states were not prepared to change their boundaries and so the colonial boundaries that divided people were still maintained. African Unity was made even more difficult to achieve.

Another reason that has contributed to the failure of African Unity has been the grip of neo-colonialism. In accepting political independence many African leaders believed that they would then be able to improve the lives of their people. Faced with the many problems of new and struggling nations, many African leaders failed to meet these challenges. Development was restricted to export production and in many cases was controlled by the transnational. Achievement of a "better life" for the peoples of Africa was still far away.

However, some African leader, like Nkrumah, Nyerere, Samora Machel and Cabral, attempted

to break away from the grip of neo-colonialism. In most cases this proved difficult because the economies of these countries were so closely tied to the economies of the transnationals of the West. This attempt to break away from neo-colonialism has divided the state and leaders of the OAU.

In 1976 the OAU was split down the middle over the question of recognition of the MPLA led by Dr Neto. Half the delegates recognised Dr Neto as the sole leader of Angola, while the other half insisted on a government of national unity made up of all three liberation movements. At the bottom of this conflict was the issue of the leader's attitude to neo-colonisation. Samora Machel, President of Mozambique explained the situation as follows:

"In Angola, there are two parties in conflict: one on the side of imperialism and its allies; on the other side, the progressive popular forces who support MPLA..."

Although the OAU has survived for 17 years, its positive achievements are few. Despite the serious threat to its existence and the disunity, the OAU has nevertheless survived.

But as long as disunity exists and the OAU still remains a political organisation, its achievements will always be minimum.



President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia seen with the South African Prime Minister, Mr John Vorster, at the time of the meeting between the liberation movements of Zimbabwe and Ian Smith in 1975. Both men were instrumental in setting up this meeting.

DETENTE and DIALOGUE

IN AUGUST 1965 a special train halted on the railway bridge that crosses the Zambesi River. For three days this special train was to be the meeting place between the Zimbabwe liberation organisations and the illegal regime of Ian Smith of Rhodesia.

Both parties had been brought together by President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Prime Minister John Vorster of South Africa. While attention was focussed on the bridge, both Kaunda and Vorster met in Livingstone in Zambia. Why had President Kaunda agreed to meet Vorster?

BOTH the words 'dialogue' and 'detente' have in their meaning two parties. Dialogue being a discussion between two parties, while detente is an interaction between two parties. These words were to be heard frequently in the conference hall of many OAU meeting in the 1960's and 1970's. The parties involved were African states and the minority representative government of South Africa.

AS the tide of independence rolled across Africa in the 1960's, the remaining white ruled parts of Africa were South Africa, South West Africa, Mozambique, Angola and Rhodesia. With each new African country taking its place in the OAU, a further strengthening was added to the OAU's determination to assist in the ending of white domination in Southern Africa.

While Africa continues to search for unity, there can be little doubt about the unity in the OAU with regard to South Africa.

This united approach to South Africa rests in the belief by the OAU members that minority rules in South Africa must end.

Aware of economic and political isolation, South African embarked on a policy called 'dialogue' - a looking towards independent Africa for trade and support.

The OAU attempts to change the 'White South'



President, Dr. Banda of Malawi.



President of the Ivory Coast, Houphouët-Boigny, openly supported the policy of "dialogue" with South Africa.



Leopold Senghor, President of Senegal opposed dialogue with South Africa. "The dialogue must be between the South African government, its white opposition, and the black majority of the population".

Dialogue

In its 1963 Charter the OAU made its policy on apartheid very clear. The African countries would have no link with South Africa. They would also try to persuade the rest of the world to cut off links with South Africa. They hoped that the isolation of South Africa would compel the government to give up apartheid.

Aware of the dangers of isolation the South African government has tried to oppose the policy of the OAU. It has tried to make friends in Africa. It calls this policy "dialogue"

At first, President Banda of Malawi was the only African leader who was friendly towards the South African government.

But in the late 1960s South Africa increased its efforts to win friends in independent Africa.

And it began to have some success. Members of the South African government were having secret meetings with some leader of Africa.

In 1971 the President of the Ivory Coast, Houphouët-Boigny, openly declared his support for the policy of "dialogue" with South Africa. He said that it was better to discuss problems than to encourage war. Some other African leaders agreed with him. President Banda came to South Africa on a public visit.

The "dialogue" policy of South Africa seemed to be working. If South Africa could win friends in Africa, it would soon win friends in the rest of the world.

But many of the leaders of Africa rejected talking with the government that did not represent all the people of South Africa. They saw that dialogue with South Africa could lead to a split in the OAU.

At the OAU summit meeting of 1971 there was a long and angry discussion about "dialogue". In its "Declaration on the Question of Dialogue", call for dialogue with South Africa as a manoeuvre by South Africa to rescue itself from isolation. The Ethiopian representative argued for the majority of African leaders when he said:

"The freedom of millions is not the subject of bargaining. Dialogue is a word full of noise, but it means nothing."

DETENTE

causes fragmentation in Africa

In 1974 the South African government declared a new foreign policy called detente.

During 1974 the representatives of the white South African government made several visits to some states in West and Central Africa. South Africa wished to break the isolation and secured trade from such contacts.

Still these contacts with independent Africa were very few. But South Africa's detente policy took a great leap forward in 1974. During that year, Zambia began to discuss the problem of Rhodesia with the South African government.

Why was there this great change? Why did President Kaunda send envoys to discuss the future of Zimbabwe with the South African governments?

There were tremendous changes taking place in Southern Africa during 1974 and 1975:

- The Portuguese colonial empire was collapsing, and the people of Angola and Mozambique were on the threshold of independence,
- The guerrilla war in Zimbabwe was becoming fiercer, and the Rhodesian government was in trouble,
- The South African government was anxious, it wanted a quick peaceful settlement in Zimbabwe so that the guerrilla war would not spill over into South Africa.



South African soldiers in Angola. Their invasion unified the OAU in opposition against this move.

- Zambia also wanted a quick settlement, because the Zambian support of the guerrillas was costing Zambia a lot.

So all the governments in Southern Africa felt that Rhodesia was a problem. They felt they could solve this problem by discussing it.

The Frontline Presidents of Tanzania, Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique and Angola supported this move. They promised to bring the guerrillas to the negotiating table. The South African government promised to bring Smith. So the South African government and the Zambian government discussed the situation and bargained about the agreement during 1975.

But there were many African leaders who felt uneasy about this.

A growing number of voices in the OAU opposed talks with South Africa. Senghor, the Senegalese leader, said "The dialogue which must be engaged in to solve the problem of apartheid is not between Mr Vorster and the African Heads of state, but between the South African government, its white opposition and the black majority of the population".

Still, during 1975 Vorster's contacts with Africa seemed to be increasing. The highpoint of dialogue came in August. At the Victoria Falls, the illegal regime of Ian Smith met the Zimbabwean guerrillas led by Nkomo and Sithole. At the same time Vorster met President Kaunda.

For the South African leader it was a great moment. At last Vorster seemed to have broken through to Africa

The end of detente

By the end of 1975 the South African policy of detente was almost dead. What caused this sudden change?

Towards the end of 1975 the South African army invaded Angola. This invasion angered Africa. The OAU condemned the South African attack and once more the OAU was united in its opposition to

South Africa. Detente was dead.

Since then the policy of the OAU has been to support the liberation movements. Africa showed its strength in world affairs when the OAU refused to recognise the “independence” of the Transkei or any other Bantustan. Not one country in Africa recognised any of the independent homelands.

THE LUSAKA MANIFESTO

The OAU policy on Southern Africa is based on the Lusaka Manifesto, which was written in 1969.

The Lusaka Manifesto make it clear that “All men are equal, and have equal, and have equal rights to dignity and respect regardless of colour, race, religion or sex... all men have the right and the duty to participate, as equal members of the society, in their own government.”

The Lusaka Manifesto says that the OAU will help South Africans “to be freed from the propaganda of racialism, and given an opportunity to be men – no white men, brown men, yellow men and black men.

The Manifesto ends by saying: “On this liberation we can neither surrender nor compromise. We have always preferred to achieve it without physical violence. We would prefer to negotiate rather than destroy, to talk rather than kill. If peaceful progress towards liberation were possible, or if it becomes possible in the future, we would urge our brothers in resistance movements to use peaceful methods of struggle.

“But while peaceful progress is blocked by those in power in the countries of Southern Africa, we have no choice but to give to the people of those countries all the support that we can against their oppressors.”

Since the writing of the Lusaka Manifest, Angola Mozambique and Zimbabwe have won their independence.

Post – independence problems in Africa

1979 was the year in which the people of Africa overthrew three of their worst dictators. They overthrew Idi Amin, the President of Uganda. They also overthrew “Emperor” Bokassa of the Central African Republic and Macious Nguema of Equatorial Guinea. The people of these three countries rejoiced to gain their freedom.



The world recently saw the downfall of two tyrants. Above is Ex-Emperor Jean-Bedel Bokassa of the Central Africa Republic who was deposed in a bloodless coup while in Libya. In dress modelled on that of his hero, Napoleon Bonaparte.

the north. The army arrested some of the politicians who were against Obote. Obote became a President with even greater power. There were no more special privileges for Buganda.

Ex-President Idi Amin’s bloody memory is kept alive. Many sources say that during his office, over 300 000 people were butchered to death. Described as a “Black Hitler” by many and as a “racist murderer” by Julius Nyerere, Amin was also over-powered through a coup.

UGANDA TORN BY TRIBALISM

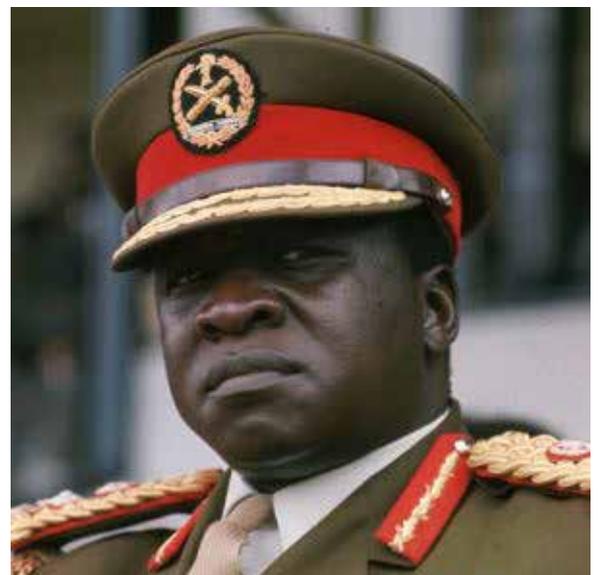
In Uganda thousands of people were killed under Amin’s rule, and he became one of the most bloody dictators in Independent Africa.

When Uganda became independent from Britain in 1962 Milton Obote became the first Prime Minister. Colonial rule had made one region, Buganda, much wealthier and more developed than the other areas. The people in Buganda were richer and had more education. So it was easier for the leaders of Buganda to take positions of power in government and in business.

But the Bugandans were only one-sided of all the people in Uganda. The Prime Minister, Obote, was not a Bugandan. He was from the north of the country. He did not want to see the rich Bugandans taking all the power and becoming richer. He wanted the others in Uganda to share independence. The powerful men of Buganda felt threatened by this. For them the answer was to win power in the government and make their position secure.

The Buganda leaders began to gain more and more support in the ruling party in Parliament. So Obote used the army to hold on to his position.

Most of the soldiers were, like Obote himself, men from



Tribalism splits Africa by destroying National Unity

THE Bugandan leaders did not accept that there were no longer special privileges for them. Buganda wanted to leave Uganda and form a separate country. But Obote would not allow this, as Buganda was the richest part of his country. So he sent the army into Buganda to put down the rebels. There was fighting, and many Bugandans were killed.

When this happened all the other groups in the country suspected Obote of using the army to favour his own people. It became worse when Obote began to speak about socialism. He appealed to the poor people to unite. He was trying to stop tribalism.

The wealthy leaders of each group felt threatened by this, so they called on their followers to stick together as tribal groups.

Now the Bugandans feared Obote. The southerners mistrusted him. The powerful people were threatened. So Obote felt insecure and he appealed to his own people, the Langi. He increased the Langi in the army, and he formed a special Langi police force. So the man who wanted to end tribalism was forced to use tribalism. This made other still more suspicious, and Obote began to use violence to hold down his enemies.

Meanwhile, other men were growing strong in the army. They wanted power. One of these men was Idi Amin. In 1971 the army, supported other groups who were against Obote, overthrew the government and Idi Amin became the ruler of Uganda.

The new dictator

At first Amin also tried to show the people that tribalism was destructive. But he had the same problems as Obote.

People mistrusted him. Amin was a Muslim who came from the northeast of Uganda. He dismissed or killed Obote's men, so the people of Obote's tribe hated him. The Bugandans also feared him. So did the southerners and many of the Christians.

In 1972 Amin forced all the Asians to leave Uganda. He seized their property and businesses. He gave this wealth to the officers of the army. Everyone else resented this, seeing he favoured his own.

As the suspicions became worse Amin and his officers grew anxious. They hired mercenaries from nearby Sudan and Zaire. The army killed anyone who disagreed, and the soldiers looted as much as they liked.

Thousands of people were killed under Amin's rule, and he became one of the worst dictators of Africa. At last, in 1979 a Tanzanian army helped the people of Uganda overthrow the tyrant.

Although the country has been almost destroyed by Amin's rule, and by the war between his army and Tanzania, the Ugandans could begin a new life.



The breaker and the maker of Uganda? Here Idi Amin (left) then in Dr. A.M. Obote's army salutes his leader whom he later overthrew through a coup. Obote regained power in 1980.

Colonialists gone yet their policy of divide-and-rule still reigns

When the African leaders won independence from the colonial powers in the years around 1960, their countries faced many problems. One of the biggest was the problem of national unity. All the people of a country must work together if that country is to grow and be strong. In many parts of Africa, instead of being united, the people split up into groups, each struggling for power.

Sometimes war broke out between these groups. Why was this so? In the first place, the borders each country inherited were the same borders made by the European colonial powers. The European governments had decided upon these borders as they sat in conference rooms in Europe. So the borders between countries did not grow out of the needs of Africa.

Often a border would cut through the middle of a group of people who belonged to the same family group, spoke the same language or shared common customs and traditions.

In addition people of different traditions and languages were forced to live with each other under one government. In many African countries after independence these groups did not co-operate with each other. Instead, they fought for better positions in the government.

What is tribalism?

Some historians call this bitter struggle between groups tribalism. But usually they do not explain how this tribalism came about. The anthropologist, Archie Mafeje, writes that tribalism was created by colonialism.

Tribalism and colonialism

When the colonialists came to Africa, each group of Africans came closer together. The people of each tribe united to resist the invaders. So people came to feel very strongly that they belonged to one group, or

tribe, rather than to another. Also, the colonisers often made friends with one chief and used him to conquer others. So groups of people became enemies.

After they conquered Africa, the Europeans began the policy of divide-and-rule. They favoured some and pushed back others. Also, they ruled through the traditional kings and chiefs. So the people remained divided as tribes. The different groups found themselves competing with each other as tribes to gain the favour of the colonial rulers.

As the time of independence the new African leaders inherited this tradition of struggle between the groups. Each group was fighting with the others for the favour of the rulers.

This grouping together to seek a stronger position even continued after many African countries became independent. Politicians used their positions to win favour for their group instead of considering national development.

In the struggle for independence against the colonists the people of each country came together behind their leaders. This was the time of African nationalism. All the leaders spoke of unity. But soon after independence in some countries, the different groups in the nation began quarrelling with each other.

This was because most of the people still lived in the rural areas. They were peasants and migrant workers.

They were related to many of the other families in the same areas. They all spoke the same language and had the same customs. For these peasants, the tribal groups to which they belonged was much more important than the idea of a "nation". And even in the cities, many of the migrant workers still thought of rural areas as home because their families lived there.

Under colonial rule countries were unevenly developed. Some areas had more wealth than other, for example, Buganda in Uganda. Such areas had cities, farms, roads, hospitals and schools. Other areas wanted the same things, and then the rich areas felt threatened.

The colonial rulers used great force to control the people they had conquered, and to seize their wealth. So the colonial government was extremely powerful.

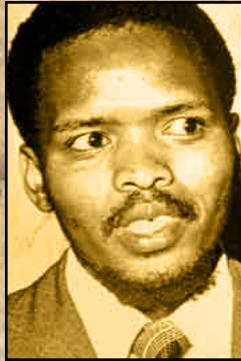
In some countries the independent governments continued this pattern of control. Because they wanted this sudden chance of wealth, politicians scrambled to enter the government. National unity and national development were forgotten. Individual politicians sought to accumulate as much wealth as possible.

A politician needed votes from many people to elect him to parliament. So each politician appealed to all the voters of his own tribe. He promised that he would bring roads, schools, business and employment to his people if they voted for him.

Africa and the African diaspora produced many thinkers and leaders, some of whom are represented here. However we know that the struggles for political, socio-economic and cultural decolonisation was and is fought for by Africa's peasants, workers, students and intellectuals who were and remain the main agents of change.



Thomas Sankara



Steve Biko



Ruth First



Amilcar Cabral



Fatima Meer



Jamilah Buhrayd



Julius Nyerere



Dulcie September



Sibongile Mkhabela



**Miriam Makeba and
Stokely Carmichael
(Kwame Ture)**



Frantz Fanon



Ben Bella



Walter Rodney



Hendrik Witbooi



**Janub (Jane)
Gool-Tabata**



Walter Sisulu



Patrice Lumumba



Kwame Nkrumah



Robert Sobukwe



Dennis Brutus



The revolution and women's liberation go together.
We do not talk of emancipation as an act of charity or
because of a surge of human compassion.
It is a basic necessity for the triumph of the revolution.
Women hold up the other half of the sky.
-Thomas Sankara-

