

OXFORD IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME



CONFLICT AND INTERVENTION

COURSE COMPANION

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Writing the internal assessment for IB History

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1 RWANDA, 1990–1998

1.1 Africa in the late 19th century: European imperialism in East Africa

Conceptual understanding

Key concepts

- Perspectives
- Change
- Consequence

Key questions

- What happened to effect change in Africa?

Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning a lion wakes up. It knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle ... when the sun comes up, you'd better be running.

— An African saying

Introduction

We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness.

— Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness and the Congo Diary*

Early in the morning of 7 April 1994, the killing began. For one hundred days as spring turned to summer in the tiny African country of Rwanda, the number of corpses rose into the hundreds of thousands before the rate of killing began to slow down and come to a halt. By the beginning of July, when much of the developed world were planning their vacations and basking in the summer sunshine, the people of Rwanda had been destroyed. In a small African republic, the rate of killing exceeded that of any other known event in history. Out of the original population of almost 8 million Rwandans, at least 800,000 people had been butchered; some estimates put the number of dead at over a million. The massacre of civilians, men, women and children eclipsed the genocide which had taken place in Cambodia in the 1970s and the slaughter of Bosnians in the 1990s. The speed of killing was approximately five times the rate of the extermination of the Jews by the Germans during the Holocaust. “It was...” wrote Samantha Power (2001), “the fastest, most efficient killing spree of the twentieth century.” The Rwandan genocide was the result of a deliberate policy by an elite in the government to keep itself in power. This small faction, faced with losing



▲ Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor

power, altered a strategy of ethnic division into genocide, and seized control of the state and its machinery to carry out the bloody massacre which transformed Rwanda and the whole Great Lakes region for years to follow.

Background

The story of the conquest and partition of Africa took place over a relatively short time in the final decades of the 19th century. The majority of the takeover happened between 1880 and the end of the century.

The scramble for Africa in the mid-1880s took place largely because of changes of power in Europe. Some historians advocate economic reasons as the driving force in the opening up of the African continent; others suggest the crumbling of British power and growing European competition for the renewed interest in imperialism. As European states became industrialized, a result was a revolution in power driven partially by the creation of two new European states: Italy and, more significantly, Germany.

The world had experienced European imperialism for centuries but the takeover of the huge continent of Africa was virtually unparalleled in its scale and speed. In 1880, 10% of the landmass had been colonized; European powers controlled some coastal ports in a number of African countries but few Europeans had penetrated the interior. By 1914 only 10% of the continent remained out of European control. What had happened to effect this change? Why had this taken place and what was the impact on the countries concerned, both on the colonizers and the subjects who came under imperial control? These are *essential questions*, which need to be addressed in order to understand what happened in Rwanda as well as a number of other African countries over the course of the 20th century.

What had happened to effect this change in Africa?

A combination of reasons encouraged competition in the African continent. These elements were to be found in the power politics of Europe as well as in the technological advances which had taken place in the century. Certainly the growth of industrialization and the revolution in transport and communications laid the ground for possible expansion, and this was not limited to the African continent in this period. Earlier periods of European overseas expansion were driven by the search for commodities – spices, sugar, silks, slaves and precious metals, for example. In the latter half of the 19th century, instead of being primarily buyers of goods found overseas, the industrializing nations were increasingly becoming sellers, in search of markets for their own products. Progress made in medical knowledge enabled people to be better equipped to face the multitude of diseases and challenges to health. Among some was a growing awareness that the more developed nations could and should help other parts of the world to develop; in the vernacular of the day, bringing others into the “light of civilization”. For the majority however, there were more egocentric and self-serving motives. Principal among these was Léopold II, the King of the Belgians, who in 1876 shamelessly said, “*I do not want to miss a good chance of getting us a slice of this magnificent African cake*”.

ATL Research and thinking skills

Why did this rapid and largely (from the European perspective) easy takeover of the continent occur, and happen so smoothly?



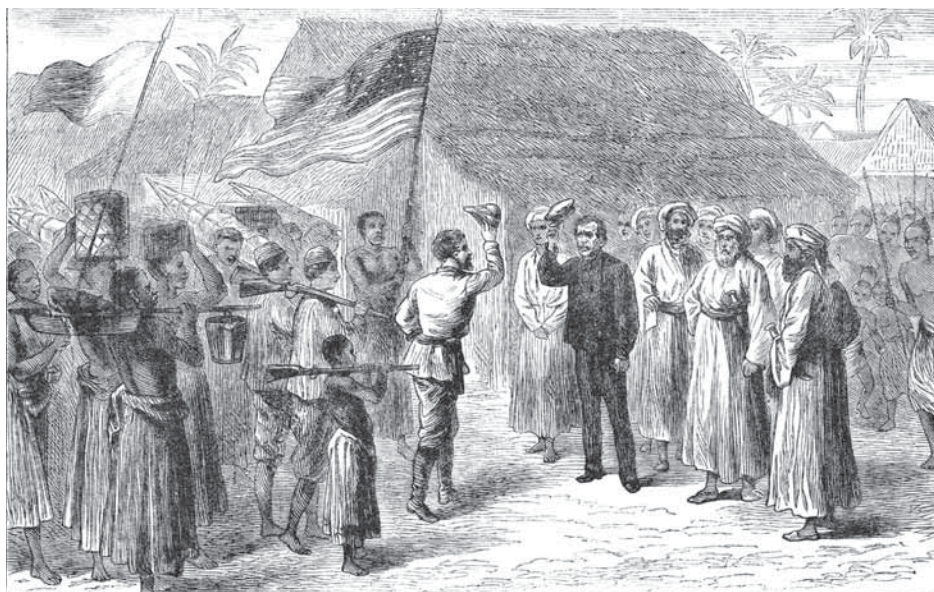
Why had this taken place?

One of the countries that was a driving force towards this change in Africa was Belgium, a small kingdom that had gained its independence from the Netherlands in 1830. The accession to the throne of Léopold II in 1865 transformed the country into a colonial power on the world stage and his reign galvanized relations between the European powers as well as having a devastating impact on central Africa.

In 1876, Léopold founded the International African Society and invited the journalist and explorer, Henry Morton Stanley to help him open up the continent. By 1871 Stanley achieved the fame he so desperately sought by leading an expedition into the interior of Africa to search for the missionary and explorer David Livingstone. Livingstone was a national hero in Britain and had been the first white man to cross the continent of Africa from coast to coast. Having been out of contact for four years, Stanley's meeting with Livingstone in Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika (in today's eastern Tanzania) on 10 November 1871 has become legendary. When Henry Stanley found Livingstone he uttered the famous words "*Dr Livingstone, I presume?*" This great publicity scoop in tracking down Livingstone overshadowed Stanley's later and greater achievement which was solving the last great geographical mystery of Africa by mapping the Congo River. The name given him by the Congolese, "Bula Matari", meant "Breaker of Rocks" in recognition of this great achievement in African exploration. Stanley exemplified the spirit of the so-called "New Imperialism". When he returned to England he gave a speech in 1884 saying:

There are 40,000,000 naked people and the cotton-spinners of Manchester (England) are waiting to clothe them ... Birmingham's factories are glowing with the red metal that shall presently be made into ironwork in every fashion and shape for them ... and the ministers of Christ are zealous to bring them, the poor benighted heathen, into the Christian fold.

Stanley was one of the ways in which King Léopold planned to open up the region. Following Stanley's exploration of the Congo River in 1876–77, Léopold formed the International Congo Society in 1878 with the intent to exploit the resources and establish a number of trading post stations along the Congo River, including Léopoldville (now Kinshasa). Stanley negotiated treaties with local chiefs, getting them to sign away tracts of land (with a signature of an "X", as many of them could not read or write) and followed this up with a proposal to build a railway to exploit the Congo basin. King Léopold gathered a series of paper treaties with which he was able to justify a serious foothold on the Congo and its mighty river. "*The treaties must be as short as possible and, in a couple of articles, grant us everything*", Léopold is



▲ The meeting of Stanley and David Livingstone in 1871

ATL Communication skills



▲ Henry Morton Stanley posing in 1872 with Kalulu, his adopted son

What does the photograph and the pose tell you about HM Stanley?

ATL Research and thinking skills

In order to understand the mindset of the Europeans, examine the various viewpoints offered at or around the conference. In addition, explain how and why they were able to come to some agreement over the division of such a large continent in a relatively peaceful manner.

reported to have said (Didier Gondola, 2002). The penetration of the African continent was to remain limited until the introduction of the railways and the arrival of steamships opened up navigable waterways. These developments stimulated the infiltration of the continent, but also exacerbated relations between competing states, creating further rivalries. A number of European powers agreed to meet in Berlin in 1884 to establish ground rules for the exploitation of the continent. No African representative was invited.

The Berlin Conference, 1884–85

The settlements established in Berlin represent the high point of imperialism in an age when the pre-eminence of the white race was clear for all to see. HM Stanley was the star attraction. He was the only man with any serious African experience.

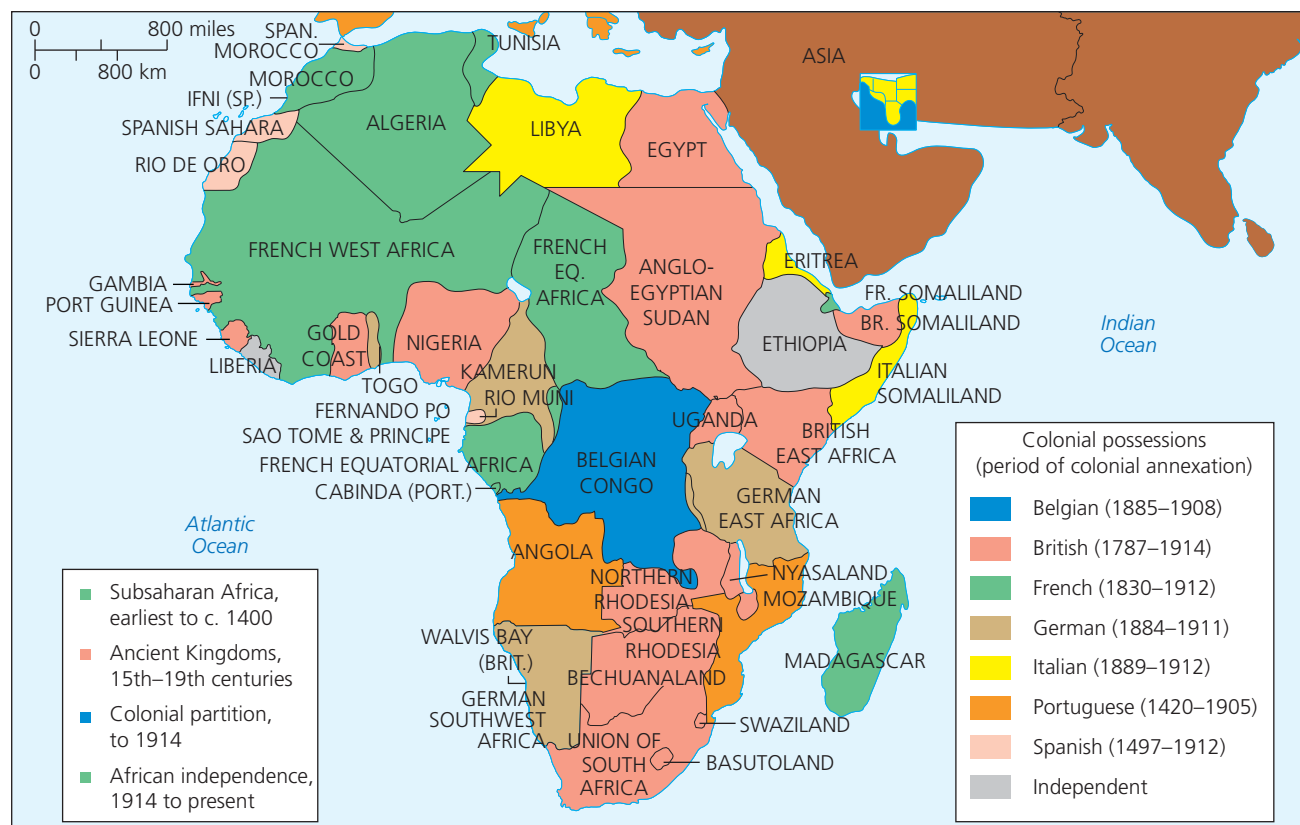
The instigator and driving force behind the meeting, King Léopold, stayed in Brussels, receiving daily telegrams on developments. The new German state was the first to recognize Léopold's Association, fearful that the bigger colonial rivals France or Britain would extend their control.

The agreements reached at Berlin by greedy and competing powers would determine Africa's future for much of the next century. They account for much of the political fragmentation which helps to explain the problems experienced by Rwanda and other newly independent African countries in the latter half of the 20th century. The conference consolidated Léopold's web of agreements, and recognizing Belgium's pre-eminent position in the Congo basin granted him a personal colony greater in area than most of western Europe itself, and almost 80 times the size of Belgium. In return, Léopold permitted access to trade for all nations and allowed missionaries to enter for him to govern the estimated 15 million Black subjects. The slave trade was officially ended and, through the Principle of Effective Occupation, it was agreed that no power should be able to gain territory legally unless they were able to exercise actual control over the land. Léopold named his newly acquired territory and personal property, the Congo Free State. Hochschild commented that the Berlin Conference had been, *"the... expression of the age... whose enthusiasm for democracy had clear limits, and slaughtered game had no vote."*

In the next two decades the magnificent African cake was divided with a host of European powers each getting their slice. Aside from the Belgians, the lion's share went to the British and the French, colonial rivals both in Africa and elsewhere in the world. The Spanish, Italians and the Portuguese extended (or kept) territories in Africa and the new European powerhouse of Germany gained a substantial empire in Africa, achieving her "place in the sun". By the turn of the century, approximately 90% of the African continent was under European control. The conference in Berlin and the ensuing "scramble for Africa" were to have far-reaching



consequences in the creation of the Rwandan state which later resulted in the instigation of an ethnic divide with tragic consequences for the people of Rwanda. As a precursor to the Rwandan genocide, the Germans conducted their own African genocide between 1904 and 1907. Regarded by many as the twentieth century's first genocide, German policy in south west Africa (present day Namibia) resulted in the deaths of up to 100,000 Herero inhabitants.



▲ Africa to 1914: Colonial partitions

ATL Communication and thinking skills

Students will need to be able to understand, interpret and address the demands of the questions asked in the IB examination. In order to do this, first you will need to:

- understand and acquire content knowledge – a solid base of factual knowledge
- develop concepts which are big, powerful ideas relevant to the discipline
- develop skills which can help you move from the acquisition of basic facts to an understanding of how and why historical skills can be applied.

In addition, concepts can provide a connection between knowledge and understanding, which is crucial for students to get to the heart of why they are studying history. Look at the following sources on imperialism.

Source skills

Source A

“How I Found Dr. Livingstone” by Henry Stanley, published in *The New York Herald*, 1871.

Henry Stanley, a well-known African explorer, started out as a reporter for the New York Herald. His paper sent him to Africa to search for Dr David Livingstone, a missionary and explorer who had been missing for years. Most believed he was dead. Stanley wrote accounts of his adventures, printed in The New York Herald, which helped stimulate a popular interest in the exploration of Africa in Britain and America. When he found Dr Livingstone, Stanley reported this famous exchange.

We were now about three hundred yards from the village of Ujiji, and the crowds are dense about me. Suddenly I hear a voice on my right say, “Good morning, sir!”

Startled at hearing this greeting in the midst of such a crowd of black people, I turn sharply around in search of the man, and see him at my side, with the blackest of faces, but animated and joyous ... a man dressed in a long white shirt, with a turban of American sheeting around his woolly head, and I ask: “Who the mischief are you?”

“I am Susi, the servant of Dr. Livingstone,” said he, smiling and showing a gleaming row of teeth.

“What! Is Dr. Livingstone here?”

“Yes, sir.”

“In this village?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Are you sure?”

“Sure, sure, sir. Why, I leave him just now.”

“Now, you, Susi, run, and tell the Doctor I am coming.”

“Yes, sir,” and off he darted like a madman...

But, during Susi’s absence, the news had been conveyed to the Doctor that it was surely a white man that was coming, whose guns were firing and whose flag could be seen; and the great Arab magnates of Ujiji ... and others, had

gathered together before the Doctor’s house, and the Doctor had come out from his veranda to discuss the matter and await my arrival... My heart beats fast, but I must not let my face betray my emotions, lest it shall detract from the dignity of a white man appearing under such extraordinary circumstances.

So I did that which I thought was most dignified. I pushed back the crowds, and, passing from the rear, walked down a living avenue of people until I came in front of the semicircle of Arabs, in the front of which stood the white man with the grey beard. As I advanced slowly towards him, I noticed he was pale, wore a bluish cap with a faded gold band round it, had on a red-sleeved waistcoat and a pair of grey tweed trousers. I would have run to him, only I was a coward in the presence of such a mob ... I would have embraced him, only he being an Englishman, I did not know how he would receive me; so I did what cowardice and false pride suggested was the best thing ... walked deliberately to him, took off my hat, and said:

“Dr. Livingstone, I presume?”

“Yes,” said he, with a kind smile, lifting his cap slightly.

I replace my hat on my head, and he puts on his cap, and we both grasp hands, and I then say aloud: “I thank God, Doctor, I have been permitted to see you.” He answered, “I feel thankful that I am here to welcome you.”

Source B

Rhodes wrote this on 2 June 1877, in Oxford, when he was 23 years old. In this he writes in support of imperialism, asserting that Britain has the right to conquer and control other lands. Rhodes moved from England to South Africa as a child and made a fortune in the diamond mine business founding the white dominated state named after him (Rhodesia – today, Zimbabwe).

“Confession of Faith” by Cecil Rhodes, 1877:
<http://www.pitt.edu/~syd/rhod.html>

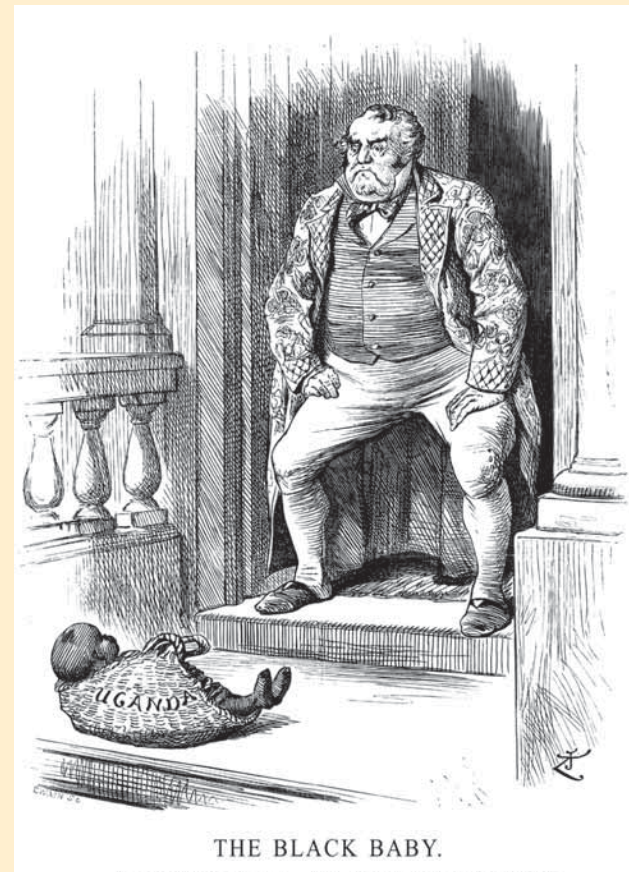


I contend that we are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race. Just fancy those parts that are at present inhabited by the most despicable specimens of human beings what an alteration there would be if they were brought under Anglo-Saxon influence, look again at the extra employment a new country added to our dominions gives. I contend that every acre added to our territory means in the future, birth to some more of the English race who otherwise would not be brought into existence. Added to this the absorption of the greater portion of the world under our rule simply means the end of all wars ... The idea gleaming and dancing before one's eyes like a will-of-the-wisp at last frames itself into a plan. Why should we not form a secret society with but one object – the furtherance of the British Empire and the bringing of the whole uncivilized world under British rule for the recovery of the United States for the making the Anglo-Saxon race but one Empire. What a dream, but yet it is probable, it is possible. I once heard it argued by a fellow in my own college, I am sorry to own it by an Englishman, that it was a good thing for us that we have lost the United States ...

We know the size of the world we know the total extent. Africa is still lying ready for us; it is our duty to take it. It is our duty to seize every opportunity of acquiring more territory and we should keep this one idea steadily before our eyes that more territory simply means more of the Anglo-Saxon race, more of the best, the most human, most honorable race the world possesses.

Source C

A cartoon, "The Black Baby", published in *Punch* magazine in 1894.



Source D

This is a powerful indictment of the evils of imperialism. At the end of the story Conrad tells us of a man named Kurtz, dying, insane, and guilty of atrocity and genocide.

J. Conrad. *Heart of Darkness* (1899).

I left in a French steamer, and she called in every blamed port they have out there, for, as far as I could see, the sole purpose of landing soldiers and custom-house officers. I watched the coast. Watching a coast as it slips by the ship is like thinking about an enigma. There it is before you ... smiling, frowning, inviting, grand, mean, insipid, or savage, and always mute with an air of whispering, come and find out. This one was almost featureless, as if still in the making, with an aspect of monotonous grimness. The edge of a colossal jungle, so

dark-green as to be almost black, fringed with white surf, ran straight, like a ruled line, far, far away along a blue sea whose glitter was blurred by a creeping mist. The sun was fierce, the land seemed to glisten and drip with steam. Here and there grayish-whitish specks showed up clustered inside the white surf, with a flag flying above them perhaps. Settlements some centuries old, and still no bigger than pinheads on the untouched expanse of their background ...

Every day the coast looked the same, as though we had not moved; but we passed various places – trading places – with names like Gran' Bassam, Little Popo; names that seemed to belong to some sordid farce acted in front of a sinister back-cloth. The idleness of a passenger, my isolation amongst all these men with whom I had no point of contact, the oily and languid sea, the uniform somberness of the coast, seemed to keep me away from the truth of things, within the toil of a mournful and senseless delusion ...

Now and then a boat from the shore gave one a momentary contact with reality. It was paddled by black fellows. You could see from afar the white of their eyeballs glistening. They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks-these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. They wanted no excuse for being there...

It was upward of thirty days before I saw the mouth of the big river. We anchored off the seat of the government. But my work would not begin till some two hundred miles farther on. So as soon as I could I made a start for a place thirty miles higher up ... At last we opened a reach. A rocky cliff appeared, mounds of turned-up earth by the shore, houses on a hill, others with iron roofs, amongst a waste of excavations, or hanging to the declivity ... A lot of people, mostly black and naked, moved about like ants. A jetty projected into the river.

A blinding sunlight drowned all this at times in a sudden recrudescence of glare. "There's your Company's station," said the Swede [*the Captain*], pointing to three wooden barrack-like structures on the rocky slope. "I will send your things up. Four boxes did you say? So. Farewell."...

A slight clinking behind me made me turn my head. Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps. Black rags were wound round their loins, and the short ends behind wagged to and fro like tails. I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking. Another report from the cliff made me think suddenly of that ship of war I had seen firing into a continent. It was the same kind of ominous voice; but these men could by no stretch of imagination be called enemies. They were called criminals, and the outraged law, like the bursting shells had come to them, an insoluble mystery from the sea. All their meager breasts panted together, the violently dilated nostrils quivered, the eyes stared stonily up-hill. They passed me within six inches, without a glance, with that complete, deathlike indifference of unhappy savages.

First question, part a – 3 marks

What, according to Source A, is the attitude of Stanley to the native inhabitants of the Congo? What evidence can you point out to support this observation?

First question, part b – 2 marks

What is the message of Source C?

Second question – 4 marks

Compare and contrast the view expressed in Source B, "*Africa is still lying ready for us; it is our duty to take it*", with that of the Punch cartoon in Source C.



TOK connections

From examining Sources C and D, consider:

- How can one gauge the extent to which a history is told from a particular cultural or national perspective?
- How does Source D contrast with Source B regarding the author's attitude towards the native Africans?

With reference to Sources B and D, consider:

- What is the relation between the style of language used and the history written?
- How can historical accounts be assessed?
- What distinguishes a better historical account from a worse one?
- Is it possible for historical writing to be free from perspective?

ATL Research skills

Conrad (see below) is one of the most famous writers of the period regarding Africa and imperialism. You may choose to discover more about Conrad as a man, his experiences and views on imperialism as well as examining the literary context of his writings.

Joseph Conrad (1857–1924)

Joseph Conrad was born in Poland but was granted British nationality in 1886. He wrote primarily in English becoming one of the greatest novelists at the turn of the 20th century. He published several stories and novels, many of them connected to the sea, trade and exploration. His themes illustrate the trials of the human spirit locked in the midst of an uncaring universe. Among his most famous novels is *Heart of Darkness*, written between 1898 and 1899. Conrad wrote to his publisher saying, “*It is a narrative after the manner of youth told by the same man dealing with his experiences on a river in Central Africa... The title I am thinking of is ‘The Heart of Darkness’ but the narrative is not gloomy.*” [Collected Letters 2: 139–40].

Heart of Darkness has become one of the most widely read of Conrad's works, and it has provoked controversy for its depiction of Africa and Africans, and for its early twentieth century perspective on women. Based considerably on Conrad's own experiences, it is probably his most popular piece of writing and has inspired works by other artists, including TS Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) and “The Hollow Men” (1925), Graham Greene's *A Burnt Out Case* (1961), and VS Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* (1979). The film director Francis Ford Coppola used *Heart of Darkness* as the inspiration for his classic film based on Vietnam called *Apocalypse Now* (1979).

Explanations for imperialism

As Europe entered the industrial age Africa began to yield up its riches. Diamonds were discovered in the south in the late 1860s and gold soon afterwards – and imperialism began to shift gears. European powers had exercised control over some of the globe in the centuries before, but the extent and speed with which areas of the world were swallowed up has contributed to the term, “new imperialism” for what happened in South East Asia and Africa in the last years of the 19th century.

1 Economic forces

These are the most common arguments for imperialism in this period. The British economist Hobson suggested the shrinking of markets and surplus of capital in need of markets. This has been challenged by others who see the crumbling of British power as a more influential force (Sanderson). The long depression in the last 20 years of the 20th century is also seen as responsible. Lenin adapted Hobson's theory and contended that Imperialism was “*a direct continuation of the fundamental properties of capitalism in general*”. The imperialist powers had found a new proletariat to exploit.

ATL Thinking skills

Conrad, J. 1899. *Heart of Darkness and the Congo Diary*:

The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to ...

- 1 According to this source, what were the motives for the expansion of imperialism in the late 19th century?
- 2 Examine some of the theories proposed for this expansion (see right). Come to conclusions about which were the most significant forces in driving these events.

2 Social forces

We can see something of the mindset of many Europeans at the turn of the century in the prevailing theories of social Darwinism. There can be little doubt that racial theories played a part in encouraging the New Imperialism. Herbert Spencer, the father of social Darwinism as an ethical theory, put forward the opinion that “might makes right” before Darwin published his own theory. It was Spencer who first used the phrase “survival of the fittest”.

As social Darwinism and ideologies of racial hierarchy became widespread, some Europeans considered it their moral duty to bring their culture and morality to the rest of the world. In France, this was referred to as the “civilizing mission”. In England it was known as the “White Man’s Burden”; Rudyard Kipling created the term in reference to US actions in the Philippines in 1899. Both Cecil Rhodes and US President Theodore Roosevelt were among those who strongly advocated social Darwinism. Race theory was to have a major role to play in Rwanda later in the century.

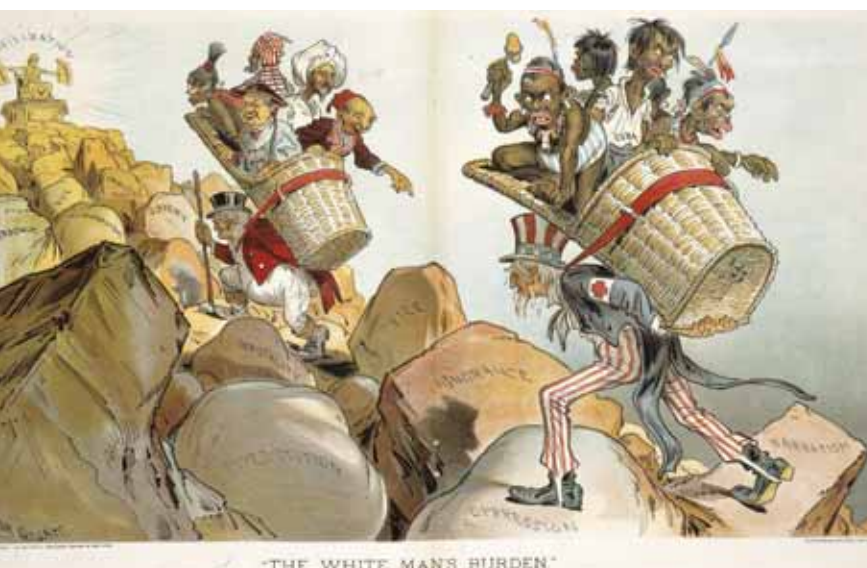
3 Strategic and military forces

The scramble for Africa was also given impetus by the competitive spirit engendered by the need to keep ahead of rivals in the drive to secure empire. For Britain in particular, the need to maintain the country’s empire pushed it to secure key bases at strategic points around the globe. The emergence of the new powers, including Germany and Italy as well as the USA, and Japan in the Far East, was certainly a contributing factor. The motivation came as much from the nature of European politics as from the drive of economic forces.

4 Individuals on the ground

The role played by individuals in encouraging imperialism is significant. These included missionaries, soldiers and explorers, all of whom in some

form or another saw it as desirable that order was established out of what they considered to be chaos, or that the benefits of civilization and religion should be established. The men with the mission – such as Frenchman Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, the German Karl Peters, Welshman Henry Morton Stanley or military men such as Charles “Chinese” Gordon – were all individuals who actively encouraged the opening up of parts of Africa previously ignored. They did this through independent actions on the ground, making deals with local rulers and by refusing or “misinterpreting” orders from their governments. The sources and nature of Imperialism in this period were diverse and complex and it seems unlikely that one theory can explain all aspects (see the sources below).



▲ Cartoon by Victor Gillam published in 1899 by Judge Publishing Company, New York, USA



Source skills

Source A

A hymn, “Onwards Chartered Soldiers”, written by Henry Labouchère in the late 1800s.

The 19th-century Liberal MP and radical journalist Henry Labouchère wrote this parody of the traditional triumphalist hymn, “Onward Christian Soldiers”; the parody is sung to the same tune.

Onward Christian soldiers
 Into heathen lands
 Prayer books in your pockets
 Rifles in your hands
 Take the happy tidings
 Where trade can be done
 Spread the peaceful gospel
 With the Gatling gun.

From the 1984 documentary “Africa: A Voyage of Discovery with Basil Davidson”, episode 5: “The Bible and the Gun” available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAK5gYRmflI

Source B

A poem, “The White Man’s Burden”, written by Rudyard Kipling in 1899.

Sometimes called the “anthem of imperialism” this poem expresses the feelings of responsibility and paternalism at the base of British imperialism.

Take up the White Man’s burden –
 Send forth the best ye breed –
 Go bind your sons to exile
 To serve your captives’ need;
 To wait in heavy harness,
 On fluttered folk and wild –
 Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
 Half-devil and half-child.
 Take up the White Man’s Burden –

Source C

Edward Morel, a British journalist in the Belgian Congo, brought attention to the abuses of imperialism in 1903, in his response to Rudyard Kipling’s poem, “The White Man’s Burden”.

It is [the Africans] who carry the “black man’s burden”. They have not withered away before the white man’s occupation. Indeed ... Africa has ultimately absorbed within itself every Caucasian and, for that matter, every Semitic invader, too. In hewing out for himself a fixed abode in Africa, the white man has massacred the African in heaps. The African has survived, and it is well for the white settlers that he has ...

What the partial occupation of his soil by the white man has failed to do; what the mapping out of European political “spheres of influence” has failed to do; what the Maxim and the rifle, the slave gang, labour in the bowels of the earth and the lash, have failed to do; what imported measles, smallpox and syphilis have failed to do; whatever the overseas slave trade failed to do, the power of modern capitalistic exploitation, assisted by modern engines of destruction, may yet succeed in accomplishing.

Source D

A cartoon, “In the Rubber Coils”, published in the magazine *Punch* in 1906.





First question, part b – 2 marks

What is the message of Source D?

Third question – 6 marks

Compare and contrast the opinions of imperialism regarding the idea of paternalism that can be identified in Sources B and C.

TOK

What is the value of using contemporary literature to illustrate and understand history? What are the possible drawbacks or risks?

ATL Communication, thinking and research skills

- 1 What opinion of imperialism can be gained from reading Source A?
- 2 Examine the arguments and debate the issues in class or on paper, to construct reasoned arguments and to arrive at some conclusions.
- 3 Examine the role of individuals such as those mentioned above and assess their importance in the opening up of Africa.

Examiner's hints:

First question, part b – 2 marks

What is the message of Source D?

When you are asked "what is the message of the cartoon?", you need to study the cartoon itself, identify what you see, consider the title, the possible symbolism and the message you think the cartoonist may be trying to convey.

Example answer

The image in Source D shows a Congolese native being strangled by a snake. Behind the African, a primitive house and a mother and child are fleeing. The caption is significant in that it plays on the production of rubber, a major commodity produced in the Congo. However, the small print identifies the name of the Congo "free" state ironically in that, obviously, the man is not free. This political cartoon clearly shows the pain suffered by the people of Congo during this colonization period. The ferocious snake symbolizes King Leopold II, the leader of Belgium from 1865–1909 and the man, fighting for his life, symbolizes the common Congolese people.

A more sophisticated answer may include the following.

In the Western tradition, the snake has often symbolized "evil". In the Biblical case of Adam and Eve, the snake represented evil as it tempted Eve into eating forbidden fruit and God cursed the snake above all creatures. The snake, with its head replaced by Leopold's, is shown to be crushing the man to death and the man is helpless and unable to protect himself. It tells that out of helplessness the people of this country had to follow the orders of King Leopold II and if they could not satisfy him, the result was their death.

This cartoon was published by *Punch* magazine, a British weekly magazine of humour and satire, in 1906. We can see how this cartoon is trying to illustrate how colonisation often leads to exploitation. An interesting aspect of this cartoon is the fact that although many of the nations were expanding their empires by force, many still tried to justify their motives as acting in the interests of the people they colonised. Britain showed Belgium as a country that mistreated and murdered in Africa as a counterpoint to England as a country that "helped" African nations.

References and further reading

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