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Colonialism and Mandates

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ture, and a major international voice influential in the overturning of the apartheid system in South Africa. Roman Catholicism has grown by 20 times since 1980, and includes among its most influential members the Nigerian cardinal Francis Arinze, who has sought interfaith dialogue, and Ghanaian Peter Turkson. Tension between local customs and Church practices exist, of course, most recently demonstrated in the creation of the Catholic Apostolic National Church in Uganda by a group of married priests. In fact, vocations to the priesthood are strongest in the African continent, and it is now sending out missionaries around the world.

Congo (Zaire) is now about 95 percent Christian, Angola 94 percent, Uganda 89 percent, South Africa 83 percent, Rwanda 83 percent, Zambia 82 percent, Kenya 79 percent, Zimbabwe 68 percent, Ethiopia 58 percent, Ghana 55 percent, Cameroon 54 percent, Tanzania 50 percent, and Nigeria 46 percent. Yet one cannot avoid the accompanying statistic, that the Rwandan genocide that led to well over 800,000 murders was a Christian-on-Christian event.

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See Also: Cults; Islam; Rastafarianism; Religions, Minority; Religions, Traditional; Witchcraft and Sorcery.

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Colonialism and Mandates

Daily life in contemporary African countries must be understood as determined by their status as members of an interlocking network of postcolonies, striving to imagine themselves as related through Pan-Africanism but struggling first to realize themselves as fully functioning nations.

Even though Ethiopia and Liberia are generally spoken of as the only countries in Africa that were not colonized, this actually suggests the level of subjugation the rest of the continent did experience. After all, if Italy failed in its attempt to take over Ethiopia in the 1880s, Mussolini succeeded in doing so in 1936; Liberia was, in fact, a colony for several decades, created in 1822 by the American Society for Colonization of Free People of Color of the United States as a destination for freed American slaves.

The drive toward colonization that characterized Europe in the 19th century had reached its zenith in 1885 at the Berlin Conference, called by Otto von Bismarck to settle Belgium's claims on the Congo River basin. Subsequently nicknamed the "scramble for Africa," this conference was attended by representatives from the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, the United States, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Sweden-Norway, and Turkey (the Ottoman Empire), who divided up the continent as if it were a birthday cake.

Britain had been well established in South Africa for some time before this conference, as well as in Lagos, the Gold Coast protectorate, the Gambia, and Sierra Leone; Cecil Rhodes had tried to build a railroad that would extend British control from Cairo to Cape Town. France had focused on Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and part of Dahomey, and gained much of the rest of western Africa.

It had also settled in Algeria, but most of northern Africa (Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya) was controlled by the Ottoman Turks. Portugal had been in Angola since 1482 and in Mozambique since 1498. Germany had Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanganyika in the east and what is now Namibia and Cameroon in the west. Spain took Equatorial Guinea.

These understandings among the European powers had often worked in more than the obvious ways against the inhabitants of Africa, for example, through economic exploitation and the trampling of human

rights. Whereas in drawing maps of “their” new territories, the colonizers used natural borders like rivers to good effect, just as frequently, they drew arbitrary straight lines through tribal lands strictly for the convenience of the colonial powers.

Such cartography served a political function, dividing natural indigenous groups into multiple new distinct nationalities that were now expected to define themselves quite differently than they had for centuries. Conversely, “nations” were called into being that uncomfortably conjoined tribes that had little in common except, in many cases, mutual suspicion: one sometimes had more in common with one’s tribal brother across the border than with one’s fellow citizen who spoke a different language and had unfamiliar customs.

The most populous country on the continent, for example, Nigeria, with 155 million citizens (one-sixth of Africa’s people), had more than 250 ethnic groups (Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo being the largest) and was roughly equally divided between Sunni Muslims (in the north) and Christians (in the middle and south). Even with a literacy rate of 68 percent and the country’s vast natural resources, such a variegated nation would have difficulty holding itself together. This inherent heterogeneity may have been intended by the signers of the Berlin Conference, who would have sought to prevent any unified indigenous opposition to their continued rule.

World Wars I and II

World Wars I and II necessarily further complicated daily life on the African continent, as European powers attacked each other and sought territorial compensation once the dust cleared. During World War I, there were more than 170,000 west Africans fighting in the French army, and more than 30,000 of them died in that struggle. After World War I, the Paris Peace Conference suggested a series of mandates that were written into the covenant of the League of Nations. These categorized dependent regions of the world based on Europe’s assessment of their political and economic state and readiness for self-governance. None of the African territories in question was granted Class A status (capable of a provisional independence); the German colonies and protectorates of Togoland, Kamerun, and German East Africa were Class B mandate territories, with resulting confusion

for their inhabitants: Togoland became two countries, one French and one British. Kamerun, likewise, was divided between France and England. German East Africa became Tanganyika (British) and Ruanda-Urundi (Belgian). The third classification designated regions that did not have the wherewithal to stand as nations, since their population was small or scattered. Namibia (then called German South-West Africa) fit this Class C mandate and was allocated to the Union of South Africa for administration.

In World War II, about 9 percent of the French army was from Africa, and more than 500,000 African troops served with the British forces. The uranium used in the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was taken from the mines in the Belgian Congo. Following the war, the need to be subservient to these warring imperialists was less evident to Africans, and over the rest of the century, most of the colonies gained their independence: 1951, Libya; 1956, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia; 1957, Ghana; 1958, Guinea; 1960, Côte d’Ivoire, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Upper Volta, Togo, Benin, Cameroon, Gabon, Somalia, Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Chad, Central African Republic, Zaire, Madagascar; 1961, Sierra Leone, Tanganyika; 1962, Algeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi; 1963, Zambia, Kenya; 1964, Malawi; 1965, Gambia; 1966, Botswana, Lesotho; 1967, Swaziland; 1968, Equatorial Guinea; 1973, Guinea Bissau; 1975, Angola, Mozambique; 1977, Djibouti; 1979, Zimbabwe; 1990, Namibia; 1993, Eritrea. Egypt had been independent since 1922, and the Republic of South Africa had become independent in 1931. Such a list is a reminder that Africa is a continent of very young nations.

The concomitant destabilization of much of the continent in the absence of a class of trained citizens who could maintain necessary social institutions was repeated throughout the continent, and exemplified in the role of the *évolués* in the Belgian Congo. This was the elite group of a few thousand Congolese who were certified as having sufficiently assimilated into French culture to be granted more civil liberties and coincident responsibility. They split along ideological lines, with the favored group supporting one unified Congolese identity (with whom Patrice Lumumba identified) and the other group championing local differences. As indigenous demands accelerated, Belgium suddenly and without much preparation with-

drew most Belgians and seemingly abandoned the colony to its own resources. The result was several years of infighting, assassinations, and, ultimately, dictatorship.

The Cold War

During the cold war (1961–89), African nations were stand-ins in the chess game between Western powers and the Soviet Union. As a partner of the Soviet Union, Cuba involved itself in 17 countries and three insurgencies. In turn, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was active throughout the continent. One might say, therefore, that despite independence, the region was victimized again through a new form of destabilizing colonization that entangled them in battles that were not really their own. The United States and Soviet Union battled for influence in Egypt, and took opposite sides in civil conflicts in the Congo, Angola, Somalia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia, with alleged or acknowledged outside manipulation in the imprisonment (Nelson Mandela, Robert Mugabe, and Jomo Kenyatta) and the overthrow or murder of multiple nationalist African leaders, including Ahmed ben Bella, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Hamed Sekou Toure, Milton Obote, Samora Marcel, Eduardo Mondlane, Luis Cabral, Kwame Nkrumah, and Patrice Lumumba. Leftover weapons following those struggles led to insurgencies that have plagued African governments ever since.

Further Conflicts

A particularly disastrous example of the colonial heritage was the conflict between Hutus and Tutsis, culminating in the 1994 murder in Rwanda of approximately 800,000 people, according to Human Rights Watch (though others have estimated the toll to have ranged between 1 million and 9 million). This took place over three and a half months, in hand-to-hand fighting using machetes. For the most part, the Western powers stood aside and let play out the genocide perpetrated by Hutus against the Tutsis. The enmity between the two groups, who were essentially ethnically identical, had been nurtured, many have said, by Belgian favoritism shown over the years to the minority Tutsis over the Hutus.

South African apartheid, of course, drew much more attention from the rest of the world, since it endured for several decades and resisted pressure that sought to

restore the rights of the indigenous population, which vastly outnumbered those of European ancestry. It was institutionalized with the elections of 1948, which rigidly demarcated everyone by race (black, white, “colored,” and Indian) and segregated residential areas. Blacks were stripped of their national citizenship in 1958, and denominated citizens of the self-governing “homeland” in which they were forced to live. Thus, national independence meant nothing at all to about 90 percent of South Africa’s population. The Organization of African Unity came into being in 1963, and in its Lusaka Manifesto of 1969, called for black majority rule in all African nations. In its subsequent Mogadishu Declaration of 1971, it concluded that it would take military intervention to bring about freedom in South Africa. Violence within its borders, isolation from the rest of the world, and a slowing economy led the government in the 1980s to begin reforming apartheid. In 1990, a year after F. W. de Klerk succeeded P. W. Botha as president, Nelson Mandela was released from prison after 27 years, and apartheid was dismantled between 1990 and 1993. The next year, Mandela became president and the nation wrote a constitution that is a model for the rest of the world. Crime has risen, and South Africa has many enduring troubles as it emerges from years of apartheid, but in many ways it is seen as a success story for the continent—resented by some, in fact, and seen as haughty.

Zimbabwe, on the other hand, while trying to recover from a legacy much like that of South Africa, has made decisions that have threatened the continued existence of the nation. President Mugabe, once seen as a model leader, has in recent years been accused of becoming a corrupt tyrant who has thrown white farmers off their lands only to enrich his cronies, rather than to redress the unfair use of the land during white dominance. As a result, as of 2010, less than 15 percent of workers in Zimbabwe are employed, inflation rates are at 300–400 percent, and half of the population is dependent on foreign food aid.

A Continent in Crisis

There are around 200 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) currently working throughout Africa, demonstrating the ongoing crisis in the continent where each new nation struggles with similar injustices that are rooted in the colonization that enriched Europe. The similarities take different shape in each country,

however. Disease remains an ongoing war, complicated horribly in recent decades by the devastation of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Of the 25 countries in the world with the highest levels of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, 24 are African. A decade ago, 17 million Africans had lost their lives to this disease, and this had orphaned 12 million children. Those numbers have only increased in subsequent years. Eight of every 10 children who have lost parents to AIDS are African. Perhaps these NGOs, established to address these enduring problems, can be read as postcolonial retribution for past sins, coming as they mostly do from the very countries that earlier pilfered the continent.

In sum, the 20th century saw the dismantling of the Berlin Conference agreements and the League of Nations mandates. The process of national solidification is still very much a work in progress, readily demonstrable in the ongoing civil wars in many of the nations (Uganda, Sudan, Nigeria, the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Algeria). This is further complicated by the fact that the cold war seems to be taking new shape in the increasing economic influence of China, to the consternation of Western powers that have long depended on African natural resources. Progress is being made against malaria and other indigenous diseases, and national economies in some countries show evidence of growth.

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See Also: Apartheid; Biafran War; Corruption; Hutu and Tutsi Genocide in Rwanda; Neocolonialism.

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Congo/Katanga Civil War

Congo bears the legacy of an exceptionally chaotic transition to independence. The secession of the province of Katanga was one of the defining moments of this period, often referred to as the Congo Crisis. A complex array of internal and external political interests collided to undermine the viability of a fragile state—a recurring theme in Congo's political history.

Seceding From Chaos?

Congo declared independence from Belgium on June 30, 1960. Within days, the Congolese army mutinied, its Belgian commander was dismissed, and Brussels sent in paratroopers to protect Belgian citizens and property. On July 11, regional leader Moïse Tshombe proclaimed the secession of the resource-rich southeastern province of Katanga, stating, "We are seceding from chaos," and thus began the Congo Katanga Civil War.

A conservative federalist, Tshombe was leader of the CONAKAT (*Tribales Confédération des Associations du Katanga*) political party. Tshombe and his provincial army staged the uprising with French, Belgian, and British backing. Faced with a widening crisis, the fledgling Congolese central government—led by Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba and President Joseph Kasavubu—appealed to Ghana, the Soviet Union, and the United Nations (UN) for assistance. In response, the UN deployed troops to thwart the secession in what was a first: a UN peacekeeping force engaged in major offensives against an assorted mix of state and nonstate actors, including the Katanga provincial army, European mercenaries, and local tribal leaders.

Katangan Uniqueness

Once part of the Luba and Lunda kingdoms, Katanga is located on the central African copper belt, which extends from Angola through Congo to Zambia. Endowed with a major share of the world's copper, cobalt, uranium, and industrial diamonds, Katanga's wealth attracted a large concentration of European settlers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This population represented massive Western interests in mineral resources and, over the years, constructed an affluent lifestyle unrivaled in the rest of Congo.

According to Donald Horowitz, economically advanced regions tend to be the home of advanced ethnic groups who have benefited from the eco-