

# 12

## *Early African responses to colonialism*

**Opposition to colonialism** European imperialism and colonialism sparked immediate response from the Africans. This reaction varied between the acceptance of, collaboration with and opposition to the new foreign rulers of the continent. The initial opposition came mainly from the traditional leaders and took place in the ethnic or tribal context. Older interpretations of these reactions characterised them as the misplaced actions of disillusioned rulers acting under the influence of superstition and witchcraft. In contrast to this, more recent views see the early opposition to imperialism as a well-ordered process with specific significance for the eventual development of nationalism and the decolonisation process which set in after the Second World War.<sup>1</sup>

**Different responses** The partition of Africa can be divided into three phases.<sup>2</sup> It commenced when the European powers made protectorate agreements with some of the local rulers. These usually included exclusive trading rights in exchange for the protection of the European power. This arrangement suited some of the traditional rulers while others, such as Prempeh I of the Asante, refused to sanction any agreement of this kind. This phase in the partition was followed by a period of unilateral agreements between the European powers in which they parcelled out the continent among themselves. This was the prelude to colonialism and resulted in chiefs losing control over their own affairs, a situation which sparked several different types of response. One was confrontation – and this included peaceful or diplomatic reaction, but also violent resistance. In some

cases diplomatic initiatives deteriorated into violence and military action of some kind, which had mixed success. Eventually only Menelik I of Ethiopia emerged victorious from a military confrontation with the foreigners, in his case the Italians.

After the completion of partition, rebellion and uprisings continued, at this stage protesting against the introduction of colonial rule. Resistance was localised and limited to the countryside, usually sparked by the collection of taxes, expropriation of land, enforced growing of certain crops, the actions of colonial officials, the introduction of Western education, or the renunciation of indigenous culture, which affected daily life in the tribal context. In these instances, religious cults and the spirit media usually played important roles. The Maji-Maji rebellion in German East Africa is an example of such an event. In some regions this form of resistance continued even after the First World War.

There were other forms of tribal protest, not necessarily under the leadership of chiefs or religious leaders. Migration across colonial boundaries was very popular, especially in the French parts of black Africa. People living near these frontiers slipped away into a neighbouring colony to evade taxes. Others settled in inhospitable regions where they lived in camps which they defended to the best of their ability. From these settlements they occasionally attacked any convenient symbol of colonialism such as plantations, warehouses, shops, tax collectors and labour agents. They exploited the rural population for food, arms and information to continue their existence. These groups were particularly active in Mozambique and Southern Rhodesia until about 1903, and their activities have been characterised as 'social banditry'.<sup>3</sup>

Less active forms of resistance were disobedience, absence from work, feigned illness, laziness and dawdling, and refusal to plant the expected crops. The rejection of civilised institutions such as schools and churches was also common and some Africans repudiated the language of their conquerors.

#### Edu- cated elite

Apart from the traditional or ethnic societies, an educated and detribalised elite group lived along the coast of West Africa. They were Christian or Muslim oriented. The Muslims, some of whom lived on the Arab-dominated north African coast and along the coast of East Africa, were also opposed to European colonialism because it signified their submission to the Christian infidel – something a devoted Muslim could not accept. The English-speaking West African Christians, in contrast, welcomed the arrival of the Europeans since they believed that a Christian education, capitalism, and industrialisation were the only prerequisites for bringing civilisation to the African continent. One of their leading spokesmen, Edward Blyden, declared: 'Our country has been partitioned, in the order ... of providence, by the European powers, and I am sure that, in spite of what has happened, or is now happening or may yet happen, this partition has been permitted for the ultimate good of the people and for the benefit of humanity'.<sup>4</sup> These people thus supported any effort to declare British protectorates in Africa: this would prevent the other European powers from doing so.<sup>5</sup>

## THE ORIGINS OF THE WESTERNISED ELITE

- Emancipated slaves** In English-speaking West Africa the westernised elite descended mainly from emancipated slaves or blacks who returned to Africa from the United States. This elite had its origin in a number of voluntary 'Return to Africa' movements launched by romantically oriented Afro-Americans. The first settlers arrived in Sierra Leone in 1787, and Freetown was established in 1792 as a home for free blacks who returned from Nova Scotia and Jamaica. After the termination of the slave trade, the British navy settled about 50 000 emancipated slaves in that region and these people, together with the Creoles, soon outnumbered all other population groups. After the emancipation of the slaves in 1834, many West Indians joined them and conducted missionary work in Africa. This contributed to the transfer of the Christian and Western lifestyle from the Afro-American blacks to Africa's Creole population.
- Contact with the New World** Christian and westernised communities spread along the coast of what became Sierra Leone, Gold Coast and Nigeria and these communities retained contact with the United States and the West Indies as well as with Britain – the triangle within which the old slave trade had been conducted. Another factor which contributed to the continued contact with the New World and England was the need expressed by these people to become educated. This lead to the foundation of the Fourah Bay College, which was a theological institution, as well as the Church Missionary Society's grammar school in Freetown in 1827. In 1876 the Fourah Bay College managed to gain affiliation to Durham University in England. Not only was this a Church of England institution, but the affiliation reaffirmed the precedent forged the previous year between Durham and a college in Barbados, Jamaica.<sup>6</sup> The result was a common educational experience that created 'the tendency of the West African elites to coalesce into a homogenous urban class along the coast from Gambia as far as Cameroon'.<sup>7</sup> This connection promoted the feeling that West Africa had a future and a common destiny.
- Pan-Africanism** The contact between West Africa and the New World brought Pan-African ideas to that part of the continent. Pan-Africanism was the brainchild of Afro-Americans who wanted to prove their solidarity with Africa. Its origin can be traced back as far as 1787, when the Free Africa Society was formed, and when the American Episcopal Church came into existence in 1816. Pan-Africanism was primarily a reaction to the poor treatment that blacks experienced in the New World and their belief that if they supported Africa's efforts to liberate itself from foreign domination, their own position would improve. As these ideas reached Africa, a feeling of solidarity arose between blacks in Africa and those in the diaspora, or dispersion. The Afro-American view of Africa was, however, vague, romantic and sentimental, since they saw the continent as a unit. This did not prevent their ideas from finding acceptance in what became British West Africa, and this helped to form a feeling of self-awareness that culminated in a clerical context. Aspiration towards church autonomy developed and became the forerunner to political demands and eventually to African nationalism.
- St Louis, Gorée** Other focal points of urbanised, detribalised Africans and Creoles were the French communes of St Louis and Gorée along the mouth of the Senegal River. This region had

the experience of 250 years of contact with France. In the middle of the eighteenth century, St Louis and nearby Gorée had a population of about 3 000 people including Frenchmen, Creoles and wealthy black traders. According to J. D. Hargreaves, these people were well assimilated, a fact that made them liable to claim certain political rights.<sup>8</sup> The local population was made up of mulattos (the offspring of a European and an African) and metis (the offspring of a European and a mulatto). These people were Roman Catholic and European in culture and some of them attended France's best universities and played a prominent role in the political and commercial life in the communes. These Christian Africans, Muslim Negroes and Creoles aspired to the position of a notable, a term designating outstanding merchants and respected members of the community.<sup>9</sup> In contrast with English-speaking West Africa, there was no contact at all with the New World.

- Luanda** A similar group, known as the mestigos, dominated Angolan society at Luanda during the nineteenth century. They were prominent in government, commercial and law circles; their ranks produced generals, lawyers, parliamentary deputies, town council-lors and mayors.<sup>10</sup>

## THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING ELITE AND COLONIALISM

**Desire for reform** As colonialism advanced, the educated elite began to realise that their new masters did not live up to their expectations. In British West Africa many lost their government posts while traders and merchants experienced bigger and stronger European and Lebanese competition. These setbacks did not stimulate an anti-colonial attitude among them. Instead they favoured reform, especially efforts to remove their grievances, the provision of facilities for education and economic development, as well as representation on the legislative and executive councils of the colonies. To achieve these aims, various methods were followed including the formation of open and secret societies and unions, the new Ethiopian millennium churches, the use of literary media such as the press (between 1890 and 1919 ten newspapers were published in the Gold Coast and five in Nigeria, all of which were critical of the government), theatre, pamphlets, books, petitions and deputations to local and metropolitan governments. Occasionally strikes and boycotts were also used.

**Organisations** Organisations such as the Fante National Political and Cultural Society (1888) were formed to counter the impact of colonialism on Fante culture.<sup>11</sup> Land questions soon sparked further reaction and brought the educated and traditional elite together in the Aborigines Rights Protection Society, an organisation which grew from the Fante Political Society and focused on the universalism, utopianism and non-racialism<sup>12</sup> preached by Christian missionaries. This also coordinated with the view of the educated elite on the prerequisites for the development of the continent. The Aborigines Rights Protection Society was established in 1897 and thus the first concern about the position of Africans in the age of imperialism was expressed in London. A Trinidad barrister, Henry Sylvester Williams, formed his African Association there and made contact with black students in the British capital. In so doing, Sylvester Williams wanted to bring the suffering of blacks under British colonial rule to the notice of what he

considered to be an ignorant British public. Land questions formed the basis of Sylvester Williams's concern, and he handled such disputes on behalf of African chiefs. The Aborigines' Rights Protection Society's first protest was against the Land Bills of 1894 and 1897, which aimed at giving the colonial government direct control of all unoccupied land in the Gold Coast. A deputation to London convinced the imperial government that all unoccupied land in the Gold Coast belonged to some extended family and under pressure, the bill was withdrawn.<sup>13</sup> Inspired by this success, the society formed itself into a permanent organisation aiming at the protection of the rulers and people of the colony.<sup>14</sup> It launched a series of petitions against the local administration and the Colonial Office and aimed at the discussion of all government measures in order to fully understand them. It also worked for constitutional reform, called for the abandonment of direct taxation and asked for improved educational facilities.

The Aborigines' Rights Protection Society became the watchdog for the interests of the indigenous population but soon afterwards it became obvious that, in some cases, the interests of the educated elite were identical to those of the traditional elite and more successes followed. In 1906 the Society had the Towns Ordinance of 1894 repealed and offered strong resistance to legislation in the Gold Coast which it regarded as detrimental to the rights of the indigenous people – especially matters concerning forestry and land. A protest meeting and a petition to the legislative council preceded another deputation to London which succeeded in having the forestry law scrapped in 1910 and instigated an enquiry into land rights and land alienation in 1912.<sup>15</sup>

**Protests in Lagos** Similar actions occurred elsewhere in British West Africa. A mass demonstration in 1895 in Lagos resulted in the withdrawal of a tax law while a government attempt to regulate the timber industry in southern Nigeria sparked concerted action not only from the educated elite, but also from the traditional leaders and European shipping and timber interests. Efforts at official control were often interpreted as infringements upon indigenous interests or unwarranted attacks on the economic endeavour of black entrepreneurs – despite the government claim to have conservationist inclinations.<sup>16</sup> Here too the elite warned the government that there was no such thing as waste land, and in 1908 a strong protest was launched against the suggested expropriation of Lagos land and the imposition of a water rate: taxes of this kind were seen as only benefiting Europeans. The Political Union, an elite organisation, similar to the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, was formed and also protested against efforts to control the press. The Political Union was less influential than its Gold Coast counterpart and gradually became a pro-colonial organisation.

**Northern Nigerian moves** Land matters were of equal importance in Nigeria and reaction to the Northern Nigerian Land Ordinance of 1910 aroused British interest. A West African Lands Committee favoured state control and criticised the exploitation of natural resources by small elite groups for their personal gain. This contrasted with the political realities of West Africa and was received with a storm of protest which brought the Lagos elite and the Yoruba chiefs together. A deputation to London resulted in the establishment of the Lagos branch of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Rights Protection Society to watch over Nigerian land interests. The Colonial Office denied the allegation that it was

breaking down land rights: it claimed its policy was not aimed at land alienation. Nevertheless it shelved the committee's recommendation and the status quo was retained because of the outbreak of the First World War.

## FRANCOPHONE AFRICA AND COLONIALISM

**Senegal** In Senegal, French colonial policy directed the growth of political awareness among the inhabitants in a somewhat different direction. When the first stirrings of this appeared in about 1900, a general mood of unrest and frustration was apparent among the African population.<sup>17</sup>

**Mulatto influence** During the nineteenth century, government institutions in Senegal were dominated by French interests and African voters could easily be bought off – until mulatto influence began to challenge this tendency. François Carpot became the representative in Paris while his brother Théodore was elected president of the Conseil Générale in Dakar. The mulattos were essentially French in outlook and the majority of Africans, although constituting between 90 and 95 per cent of the voters, still played a purely incidental role in politics. Political awareness was slow to develop among them, mainly because of a dearth of leadership in their ranks.

**Assimilation** By 1900 this began to change as the influence of Western education increased and blacks, steeped in the ideas of assimilation, favoured definite integration into French political institutions. This did not mean that they were willing to shed their traditional or Muslim values. Most of them pursued a dual goal instead of complete assimilation into French society. These Africans also spoke of equal pay for equal work. Assimilation was sought for pragmatic reasons – the vote and jobs.<sup>18</sup>

**François Carpot** The French saw this dualistic view as contradictory to the spirit of assimilation and denied the possibility that any form of partial assimilation was feasible.<sup>19</sup> The result was the decree of 1912 setting definite requirements for French citizenship. This eventually proved detrimental to François Carpot's political career as deputy in Paris where he had pioneered local interests, promoting Senegalese issues that affected his constituents. After 1910 he favoured the education of young Senegalese for government jobs rather than the importation of expensive French officials from Paris. This made him popular among the emerging elite and the mother country became aware that Senegal was her major colony in black Africa. When rumours of war in Europe increased in the years after 1910, France considered various ways of strengthening her manpower requirements and decided to build an African army – a step that the governor-general of West Africa, William Ponty, supported. Carpot was vehemently opposed to this and fought tooth and nail against the idea until 1912 when recruitment had already begun.<sup>20</sup> The result was Carpot's defeat at the polls in 1914 when the urban elite, who favoured service in the army in order to clarify and assure their status as French citizens, held him responsible for the 1912 decree on assimilation and voted against him. The rural people who supported Carpot's view against recruitment had no vote.

**Young  
Sen-  
galese**

Carpot was defeated by Blaise Diagne, who gained the support of an incipient political party called the Young Senegalese which was established in 1912. This party grew from a voluntary urban organisation, Aurora, established two years previously by educated Africans such as clerks, schoolteachers and interpreters. They met to discuss ideas, act in plays, play French sport, and socialise. In this way they created bonds of friendship in an urban setting and on occasion listened to stories about Negro participation in the politics of Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guinea.<sup>21</sup> This soon developed into a political club called the Young Senegalese and the members saw themselves as similar to the Young Turks of whom they read in newspapers.<sup>22</sup> These people were dissatisfied with mulatto domination of Senegalese politics as well as the benefits Frenchmen accrued for themselves, including a monopoly to scholarships for education in France. They considered sending a liberal Frenchman as a new representative to Paris before Blaise Diagne was suggested as a candidate for the election of 1914.

The Young Senegalese provided support for Diagne in their newspaper *Le Démocrate*, and the campaign gradually changed into one of Africans versus the whites and their mulatto allies. Diagne enjoyed some support from voteless Muslims and the Lebau, inhabitants who had lost land to the colonisers. The major issue that united all citizens was the partially successful attempt launched by the French in 1908 to deprive them of their citizen rights – a claim the French questioned because of the many illiterate and often polygamous Muslims who aspired to French citizenship. Carpot did nothing to protect these rights, and when a number of their members were discharged from the army in 1911, Diagne campaigned for a law introducing obligatory military service for the then four Senegalese communes – a step that would ensure the citizenship rights of the inhabitants. Diagne's campaign included several other issues which could benefit Senegal. He favoured the termination of Senegal's contribution to the budget of French West Africa, since it was a drain on the colony's resources; he also wanted a colonial council with powers to vote for the budget of the entire bloc of colonies, and the abolishment of the poll tax. He pressed for a medical school at Dakar, advanced social legislation, compensation for the loss of land (such as the Lebau had experienced) and he also favoured the rescheduling of customs. Diagne defeated Carpot by about 2 000 votes and became Senegal's first black representative in Paris. He formed the first political party in black Africa, the Republican Socialist Party, soon afterwards.

## POLITICAL AWARENESS IN PORTUGUESE AFRICA

**Luanda**

Political awareness similar to that in English-speaking West Africa and Senegal slowly appeared among the civilizado and mestizo population in Luanda before it spread to Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea. Initially these people were not necessarily anti-colonial or anti-Portuguese as the book *A voz de Angola clamando no deserto*, published in 1901, suggested. It criticised the way in which the Portuguese had conquered the interior and pleaded for a better deal – asking for the ending of discrimination and a bigger share in the political and economic life of Angola. Similar sentiments were expressed in other publications.

**Liga Angolana** When Portugal became a republic in 1910, several organisations came into existence in Lisbon – the way was now clear for such groups to air their views. In 1912 the Liga Angolana was established by civil servants in Luanda and it received official recognition in the following year, shortly before another body, the Gremio Africano, split from it. The formation of the Liga Angolana was followed by the Liga Guineense and the Sport and Literary Club in Portuguese Guinea. These bodies had a close relationship with the Portuguese Democratic Republican Party and they cooperated in attempts to gain the status of an overseas province for the colonies with representation in the parliament in Lisbon. This move failed, however, and the Liga, lacking substantial popular support, became a mouthpiece for mestizo dissidents. There was occasional contact with republican groups and black civilizados and the group sometimes spoke out against the forced labour policy of the Portuguese.

## NATIONALISM IN MUSLIM NORTH AFRICA

**Egyptian nationalism** After Urabi's military defeat in 1882, Egyptian nationalism went into decline. The strongest protest against the British occupation came from people in exile who tried to incite public opinion against the foreigners. Ten years later in 1893 nationalism was revived and the first signs of this reaction came from the arrogant, self-opiniated and autocratically inclined khedive Abbas Hilmi (1892–1914). Shortly after his accession to the throne, Egypt's new Austrian-educated khedive, who understood the intrigues of Egyptian court life well,<sup>23</sup> decided to uphold the prerogatives attached to his position and he appointed a prime minister of his own choice without consulting the British proconsul, Lord Cromer. Such action was totally unacceptable to Cromer, who forced Abbas's prime minister to resign. Abbas himself had to make a written statement in which he agreed that, in future, he would act in accordance with British wishes. This humiliation of Egyptian nationalism was followed up by a strengthening of British control, and the quasi-protectorate became more British in character with a marked increase in the number of British officials, underlining the fact that the khedive was in reality powerless to act independently.

**Mustafa Kemal** Abbas immediately made common cause with other nationalists such as Mustafa Kemal. They believed that they could use the envy of other powers such as France to force the British out of the country. Support came mainly from the younger civil servants who saw the khedive's humiliation as a threat to their only possibility for promotion. Hilmi also subsidised an anti-British newspaper, *al Muayyad*, which propagated the ideas of the nationalists in exile.

The reconquest of the Sudan in 1898 and the conclusion of the Entente Cordiale between France and Britain in 1904 confirmed French recognition of Britain's position in Egypt. It also gave the British presence in Egypt international respectability and dashed the nationalist hope that they could oust the British with French aid. This made a possible British withdrawal even more unlikely and Kemal and other members of the middle class, who tried to convince the Egyptians that they would be able to govern themselves, began to use the disenchantment of the peasants to further their cause. This move was given added impetus by the introduction of special courts in 1895 which

would hear cases against members of the occupational forces. The Denshawai incident (1906) and the proposal that the return of the Suez Canal, scheduled for 1968, should be deferred for another forty years, also inflamed nationalist dissatisfaction.

#### Rising nationalism

Egyptian nationalism was rising, and in the last few months of his rule Cromer could not venture out into the street without a bodyguard. Although Kemal's National Party, established in 1907, openly organised boycotts and demonstrations, this party was aimed at the small middle class and it suffered a setback when Kemal died a year later. His successor was incompetent and it became clear that Egyptian nationalism lacked real unity and mass support. Another party, the Umma, was formed in 1907. Its founders were Egyptian intellectuals who enjoyed British support. Their aims were similar to, but more moderate than, those of the National Party. They were willing to cooperate with the British and wanted to introduce social and educational reforms and to modernise Islamic ideas, because they found European ways of government acceptable. Evolutionary change was the basis of their views.<sup>24</sup> Their pro-British stance, however, did not fire the imagination of the people and they did not attract strong support. A third group, the Constitutional Reformers, identified with the interests of the khedive. These three groups and several others were not, in essence, political parties; instead, they could be described as political circles who paid no attention to social and economic questions. National independence was their only concern and this made Egyptian nationalism 'disunited and predominantly elitist'.<sup>25</sup>

#### Reforms

Under Cromer's successor, Sir Eldon Gorst, attempts were made to heal the breach with the khedive. Gorst tried to revive the Dufferin constitution, which had fallen into disuse; he ended the practice of loading the administration with Britons and admitted that he believed Britain should limit her intervention to matters that affected only it. The moderates supported this policy, and at the same time Kemal's death weakened the position of the extremists, whose concern was to curtail the khedive's powers. The proposals with regard to the retrocession of the canal and the inability and unwillingness of the legislative council to control the press were detrimental to the position of the moderates. Gorst's successor, Kitchener, reintroduced press censorship in 1911. Kitchener's main contribution, however, was in the constitutional field, and despite political instability the British tried to advance Egypt towards self-government. A new legislature replaced the existing one in 1913, and although it remained an advisory body, it consisted of 66 members elected by the people. At the same time, municipal and provincial councils also received effective power at local level. The new legislative assembly met only once before the outbreak of the First World War. Turkey (to whom, technically, Egypt belonged), joined the Central Powers – Britain's enemies. In December 1914 the British changed their minds about Egypt's status and proclaimed a protectorate headed by a high commissioner, while a sultan replaced the khedive. To placate Egyptian and Muslim dismay Britain assured the country that it alone would defend Egypt and that no Egyptian would be called upon to participate in the war. Progress towards eventual self-government was also foreshadowed.

#### Tunisia

In Tunisia, modernisation started before the French took control in 1881. A constitution was in force between 1861 and 1864 and by 1870 there was an efficient administration

based on Islamic principles, although it did not grant real control to the Tunisians. After 1881 the French followed a pragmatic and flexible policy and tried to identify with the educated elite from the Sadiki College, an institution which offered a westernised education. But the French enthusiasm for westernisation gradually antagonised the more conservative-minded because they experienced it as a threat to Islam. A revival of nationalism therefore set in under Egyptian inspiration. Quarrels amongst themselves left the elite group few choices other than conservative traditionalism, a tendency the French began to welcome after 1905 when they became increasingly annoyed by the criticism directed against them.

- Young Tunisians** A break between the elite and the French resulted from the political representation the government granted to the settlers as part of their official colonisation programme. Criticism of the French increased from 1905 and resulted in the formation of the Young Tunisians in 1907. The founders were students, steeped in the whole range of French ideas, from which they chose egalitarian republicanism. They wanted to improve the position of the Muslims, and propagated their ideas in the columns of a newspaper, *Le Tunisien*, and in self-improvement societies.<sup>26</sup> They did not think in terms of assimilation with the French but in terms of equality as people in their own right. They made moderate demands for rights in accordance with the terms of the protectorate, although their approach was more radical. Sheik Thaalbi's Salafiyya movement joined their ranks in 1909 and this gave the Young Tunisians a religious as well as a constitutional character, because the Salafiyya emphasised an inner change of heart. *Le Tunisien* appeared afterwards in both French and Arabic. The Young Tunisians could hardly be anything but anticolonial.

Together the Young Tunisians and the Salafiyya form an important dimension of the nationalist movement that developed in Tunisia. Their protest against the Italian invasion of Libya in 1911 demonstrated their influence. Excitement also ran high in November of that year when they protested against a proposal to put a Muslim cemetery under French control in order to expand a nearby stone quarry. Troops had to quell the riot that was provoked. In 1912 further disturbances occurred after an accident in which a child was killed by a tram. The Young Tunisians turned these events into a labour dispute; a boycott and a successful demand for equal pay for Tunisian employees with the Italian employees of the tram company followed. Shortly before the First World War broke out, political agitation, protest and workers' demands were clear evidence of the birth of Tunisian national consciousness, coinciding with similar signs in Egypt.<sup>27</sup> Under the circumstances, the French were forced to maintain martial law until 1921.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

- Attempts at neutrality** The First World War was essentially a struggle between the powers of Europe. Missionaries in Germany, France and Britain, as well as organisations such as the British Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, felt that Africa was not at the heart of the conflict and should not get involved. In their opinion this would only have demoralising results for the continent and the European empires. There were other attempts to keep Africa neutral, too. Belgium's attempt to secure the neutrality of the

Congo basin in terms of the Berlin Act of 1885 met with as little success as its effort to maintain its own neutrality. The suggestion of the governor of Togo that the colony be neutralised also failed – the Allies did not pay the slightest heed to this suggestion. The British, French and Belgian colonies were committed to the Allied side and the German colonies became involved on the side of the Central Powers. Independent Liberia sided with the Allies when the United States intervened in the struggle in 1917, while Ethiopia's pro-Muslim boy-emperor tended to side with Turkey before Christian nobles defeated him in 1916. Nearby Darfur, still at that stage independent from the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, reacted favourably to a Turkish call by raiding Chad, threatening Borno in Nigeria and stirring up a revolt in Kordofan before its sultan was defeated and killed in 1916. Italy and Portugal joined the Allies in 1915 and 1916 respectively, but their colonies were not of great significance in the war.

### The military impact

#### **Use of African manpower**

Military action in Africa was insignificant compared with the battles that ravaged Europe in the four years that followed the declaration of war in August 1914. This is not to say that Africa's involvement was of minor significance, because both hostile camps made large demands on the continent's manpower, both as soldiers and as porters to support the war effort. With the exception of the campaign in German South West Africa, African troops were used extensively to quell uprisings on the continent, on the Western Front and in the Middle East. This was a natural extension of their use by the colonial powers during the partitioning of Africa and the subsequent pacification of the African colonies. In German East Africa the Germans were served loyally by askaris, the Belgians used the Force Publique, and, in the case of Britain, the King's African Rifles and other forces from West Africa fought valiantly against the Germans in that region.

#### **French use of African troops**

The French exploited this source of manpower to the full, especially on the Western Front, and in November 1918 a large part of the French army was made up of colonial battalions drawn mainly from Africa. At that stage of the war the British Imperial War Cabinet was under strong pressure to increase recruitment of African soldiers to be employed in Europe as well as the Middle East where Indian troops were already doing service. The Belgians, perhaps under British diplomatic pressure, entertained the idea of utilising askaris from the Force Publique on the Western Front.<sup>28</sup>

It is claimed that over one million Africans were involved militarily in this war,<sup>29</sup> and although the Germans were falsely accused of militarising their African colonies, it was the French who were doing so. They were utilising these troops on the Western Front despite complaints by a horrified Germany that it was a contravention of international law.<sup>30</sup> The French began to raise battalions of black troops from 1900 and in 1912, shortly before the war broke out, steps were taken to create a permanent black army by making military service compulsory for all African males between the ages of 20 and 28. An army of 14 000 troops was formed in this way and in September 1914 all Senegalese battalions were transferred to the front. The war transformed French West Africa into a source of black manpower and despite the fact that compulsory military

service was generally unpopular, it was decided to recruit a further 15 000 men during 1915–1916.<sup>31</sup> The African elite favoured compulsory military service and used it to extract further political concessions from the metropolitan government – and after the extension of compulsory military service to the four Senegalese communes, France recognised the inhabitants' claim to full citizenship. By November 1917 the new measures provoked strong reaction from Governor-General Joost van Vollenhoven, who complained that they were not only draining the region's manpower beyond its limits but were making it impossible to comply with increased demands for higher food production in the federal block. Increased military conscription pushed the number of troops from the area up to 90 000. Van Vollenhoven was not the only one who resented this – conscription evoked large-scale resistance and an unwillingness to comply with the demands it made. Because of this, the French turned for help to an African of high standing, Blaise Diagne, who favoured military service of this kind. Diagne saw the situation as an opportunity to bargain for equal rights.<sup>32</sup> He was made commissioner for recruitment and was promised a package of political reforms including exemption from forced labour and the *indigénat* if he could recruit a further 40 000 men. He succeeded in doing so, and more than 60 000 men were recruited by November 1918, including some from French Equatorial Africa, although they did not see service in Europe. Others came from Morocco, Algeria and Madagascar. Eventually about 680 000 men supported the French war effort in France while some were used in Morocco and the Middle East.

#### **Migration to France**

In addition to troops, carriers or porters were recruited on a massive scale and it is calculated that three porters were necessary to support each fighting soldier. Arabs from North Africa were used to work in the factories when conscripted Frenchmen left the work benches unmanned. This began a process of voluntary immigration of labour to France (especially from Algeria) and 238 000 such labourers worked at the docks, and on the railways and other communication systems in that country. There were also 23 000 Egyptians who filled similar positions.<sup>33</sup>

#### **Recruitment**

There were three forms of recruitment. Many volunteered both as soldiers and as porters – colonial officials were surprised at the number of men who offered their services on this basis. Recruitment in Senegal was easy since many men were looking for work at the docks, and could be persuaded to enlist. In Nyasaland some were turned away because of lack of training facilities and supplies. Other volunteers saw military service as an opportunity of regaining the warrior status they had lost after the partitioning. Other motives included lust for adventure, the chance to associate freely with the armed forces of the colonial master, and the economic opportunities offered by military service. Large numbers of impoverished Egyptian peasants were certainly attracted by the wages porters could earn.

#### **Forced recruitment**

It is maintained that the greatest number of Africans were recruited against their will.<sup>34</sup> Initially recruitment was undertaken through the chiefs, who were expected to deliver quotas of men in accordance with the demands made by political officers. In some regions there was no difficulty in finding genuine volunteers but the opposite was certainly true in other regions. This sometimes contributed to the unpopularity of chiefs

– as in Northern Rhodesia.<sup>35</sup> Chiefs rounded up sick men and ex-slaves, or even went on slave-raiding excursions to obtain their quotas in an effort to avoid enlisting their subordinates or kinsmen. Many Africans wanted to escape this, and in French West Africa some fled into the bush or crossed the border into another colony. The complete depopulation of some regions resulted, while in other regions as much as half of the population disappeared. Some even mutilated themselves in order to be declared unfit for military service, while many recruits deserted because of dissatisfaction with their wages or unwillingness to become part of a European war. The counteraction to this evasion was the use of disguised methods to invoke voluntary recruitment. French authorities retaliated by holding villages collectively responsible or by hunting down some of the fugitives – steps that sparked three revolts. In all three cases the risings were based on preserving traditional values.<sup>36</sup>

#### Conscription

The third form of recruitment was conscription as practised by the French. This also developed in British East Africa where all males between the ages of 18 and 45 became liable for military service in 1915. The Ugandan Protectorate followed suit in 1917. There was forced recruitment of porters in Northern Rhodesia. Heavy demands that developed on the Syrian front obliged the British protectorate government in Egypt to conscript men and requisition animals despite their undertaking not to involve locals in the war. Tunisia, Algeria and the Belgian Congo also provided 260 000 porters.

#### African contribution in Africa

Africans made a decisive contribution to the outcome of the struggle. They were involved in almost every theatre of the war, but their greatest share was in the campaigns on their native soil. The brief Togo campaign involved African soldiers on both sides, while carriers also played a vital role. In German South West Africa, Africans were enlisted to manage railways and other transport such as ox-wagons. Portuguese Africans took part in the feeble attempts by the Portuguese to stop German raids. There was a two-year struggle in Cameroon where both British and French troops fought against German askaris before the defenders escaped into adjacent Spanish Rio Muni. Here porters again played a vital role. The longest campaign in Africa was fought in German East Africa and, though other nations were involved, Africans bore the brunt of the hostilities. While the German 'Schutztruppe' served their masters with undaunting loyalty, the Allies made use of the King's African Rifles as well as units from the Belgian Congo, Mozambique, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Somalia, Gold Coast, Gambia and Nigeria. Because the Germans had destroyed rail and road links early in the campaign, porters did the most arduous work in the region, often with 'inadequate equipment and clothing, extraordinarily heavy loads, and shortages of food'.<sup>37</sup> These conditions were common in the African theatre of the war and the death rate was very high.

#### On the Western Front

African troops played an equally vital role on the Western Front, where they participated in important battles in every phase of the war. In 1917 African units were used to quell an uprising when metropolitan units mutinied. French comrades-in-arms recognised the calibre of these soldiers, who distinguished themselves as individuals and as units. Senegalese battalions were also involved at Gallipoli, Morocco, Djibouti and in the Red Sea region. After the cessation of hostilities, Africans continued to serve in the

armies of occupation, not only in the conquered German territories but also in Mesopotamia and the occupation of the Rhineland. This latter step was experienced by the Germans as an insult because they had expressly objected to the use of African troops in the European theatre of war shortly after hostilities had begun. Others criticised the use of Africans in this way as exploitation, maintaining that it kept the Africans out of their natural surroundings with ill effects to their health. The Bolshevik Leon Trotsky also argued that Africans were misused to suppress the revolutionary masses of Europe. Many were unable to return home immediately since demobilisation dragged on into 1919, while many porters were kept away from Africa in a vain attempt to prevent the spread of influenza during the pandemic in 1918.

**Economic implications of the war; British trade benefits**

The Germans were Africa's principal traders, and the outbreak of war changed the pattern of African trade with Europe. After August 1914 Germans were excluded from colonies such as Sierra Leone, where they handled about 80 per cent of the region's export and import trade. The British became the main beneficiaries both here and in the French colonies, where the withdrawal of traders because of conscription benefited the British to such an extent that by 1917 they held 75 per cent of the region's trade. This tended to underline the view held by some that the war in Africa was fought for the benefit of British trade.<sup>38</sup>

**Effects on producers**

The war initially brought disruption, because the prices of Africa's primary products dropped and imported goods became more expensive because of shortages. This economy soon recovered as prices of products related to the war effort, such as Egyptian cotton, boomed. The introduction of price control prevented some producers from benefiting excessively from this, while others were constantly on the losing end. Gold Coast cocoa, for example, was not in such demand as oil seeds, and the ability of some undertakings to buy and sell was damaged by the withdrawal of European personnel. Although the prices of imported goods increased throughout the war, it did not affect the majority of Africans in the subsistence sector. Those in the wage-labour sector and those who produced export crops, for example the Egyptian peasants, did not benefit from the higher prices because of the increasing cost of fuel, clothing and cereals.

**State intervention in trade**

There was an increase in state intervention in Africa's economy in the form of price control, the requisition of food crops, compulsory cultivation, the recruitment of labour and the allocation of shipping space. This benefited the import and export trade of the mother countries. Subsistence crops such as yams, manioc and beans, which were needed to feed the troops, harmed the subsistence sector and where such food was requisitioned at prices below the current market prices, the producer suffered. In Egypt the fellahin could hardly keep body and soul together by 1918 because inflation and the requisitioning of food and animals made heavy demands on their income. In French West Africa the initial official view that the colonies could not make any economic contribution to the war effort changed when France began to suffer serious food shortages in 1916. Demand then increased, placing an onerous responsibility on an area suffering from depletion of its male population owing to military demands. France also turned to Madagascar, Tunisia and Morocco for supplies of foodstuff.

**Labour shortages** Another consequence of the large-scale use of Africans as troops and porters was increasing labour shortages. Recruitment in Northern Rhodesia cut Southern Rhodesia and Katanga from their source of labour, and the Belgians were obliged to use forced recruitment to keep their mines in operation. The influenza pandemic of 1918 exacerbated the position and labour shortages spread to Kenya and Southern Rhodesia. These shortages occurred among the whites too, and strengthened the move towards trade unions.

**Positive effects of war** The war also had positive results. The shortages of fertilisers and implements stimulated the development of replacement industries, and in colonies such as the Belgian Congo the emphasis shifted to self-sufficiency. This was true also of German East Africa, while the concentration of troops in Egypt placed more money into circulation. There was development of roads and ports in some areas, but colonial governments suffered because there was a lack of income because of decreased import duties. Nevertheless, some managed to carry the cost of dealing with uprisings and make some grants to the mother countries to support the war effort.

### The political impact

**Educated elite** The war caused a large-scale withdrawal of European personnel who had been called up for military service. A general slowing down of essential services seriously hampered the government's ability to deal with armed insurrections and other forms of protest that some areas experienced. The absence of colonial officials created opportunities for the educated elite to fill these vacancies and in some cases Africans were especially trained for this purpose. This explains the support the educated elite gave to the war effort.<sup>39</sup>

**John Chilembwe and the struggle against colonialism** Not everyone took this line, however; there were some who opposed the participation of Africans in the war. Among them was John Chilembwe. Although he failed to fulfil his aim, Chilembwe stood in the forefront of the large number who took up the struggle against colonialism. He was a product of the sectarian separatist church movement that had its origin in Nyasaland at the beginning of the century, and his mentor was the British missionary Joseph Booth. After a three-year stay in the United States, Chilembwe returned to Nyasaland where, apart from preaching the gospel and trying to uplift his fellow blacks, he agitated against the conscription of blacks for the war. He maintained that the war had nothing whatsoever to do with Africans and that they would certainly obtain no benefit from it. The anger aroused by conscription was aggravated by a general famine in the colony, and feelings ran high. A petition in the form of an open letter to the *Nyasaland Times* to air their grievances failed to have any positive effect, and this was followed by a short rebellion that broke out on 23 January 1915. This was put down in a few days and Chilembwe was shot while attempting to flee into Mozambique. The British feared that he would make contact with the Germans, a view that was apparently not altogether without foundation. Chilembwe's conduct had strong religious undertones that linked him with the Kitawala Movement in the Rhodesias, where the imminent end of the world was preached. Similar movements could be found in the delta area of the Niger where the demise of the British government was

proclaimed. Another group, the Mumbo cult in Kenya, was convinced that the European enemy would soon disappear.

**Revolts  
against  
Euro-  
peans**

Not all reaction towards the Europeans in these years was religiously inspired. Revolts in French Dahomey and Nigeria point to their efforts to regain an independent way of life as it had been before the arrival of the colonials – a desire that can be observed in many of the revolts that occurred in French West Africa. The Egba rising in southern Nigeria was a protest against the loss of their semi-independent status at the outbreak of the war in 1914. There was a similar attempt in Madagascar where the Merina elite, who had previously protested against the stringent test introduced for assimilation, formed a secret society in 1913 which became the core of the nationalistic movement on that island. In 1915 it was accused of a plot to oust the French and restore a Malagasy government – but at the end of the war its leaders were released from prison.<sup>40</sup> In Libya, resistance to the Italian conquest continued after the outbreak of war in Europe, while Morocco's pro-consul, Louis-Hubert Lyautey, feared insurrection if he withdrew to the Atlantic – and instead sent half of his force of 70 000 men to the front in Europe.

**Tur-  
key's  
call for  
a jihad**

Turkey's entry into the war on the side of the central powers formed a major problem for the Allies since she made a call for a jihad or holy war against them. It was feared that this could influence the Muslim population, and the Allied colonial authorities went to great pains to assure their Muslim subjects that the war was not against Islam. The Turkish call for a holy war evoked less response than the Allies had feared. There was some sympathy in Für and the British experienced anxious moments when the Sanusi from Libya attacked Egypt in November 1915. They were eventually defeated but subsequently scored a major victory over the Italians. This was followed by more victories after the Italians had shifted the bulk of their forces to the Austrian front in Europe. By 1917 Italy was on the verge of losing her North African colony altogether. Events in Libya echoed a sympathetic response in Tunisia where France needed 15 000 men to suppress a revolt, while considerable discontent was present among Muslims in French Niger and in Chad.

**Arab  
dissatis-  
faction**

After 1915 the Germans tried to spark a Muslim rising against the Allies but the activities of T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) prevented this from succeeding. But the events surrounding this tug-of-war between the European combatants for the allegiance of the Arabs evoked dissatisfaction with their lot and stimulated nationalism to such an extent that the European colonial powers in North Africa faced serious problems after the war.

### The psychological impact

**Changes in at-  
titude** The impact of the war was perhaps the most significant on this level. Africans in military service suddenly became part of a much wider and unfamiliar world which they had to share with people of different racial and cultural origins and backgrounds. This changed their outlook and attitudes towards their colonial masters. From their point of view it was truly remarkable to see white men fighting each other – something which had not happened during the partition of Africa. What is more, Europeans were

encouraging Africans in uniform to kill white men, who until then had been regarded as sacrosanct because of the colour of their skin. Fighting and dying alongside whites wiped out all differences, because the Africans realised that whites were not only human – there were also things they did not know. A new scepticism was born and, as the well-known missionary Albert Schweitzer wrote in 1922, many blacks were puzzled that whites who brought them the Gospel of Love were 'murdering each other, and throwing to the winds the commands of the Lord Jesus. When they put the question to us we are helpless ... How far the ethical and religious authority of the white man ... is impaired by this war we shall only be able to measure later on. I fear that the damage done will be very considerable.'<sup>41</sup>

#### Influence of returning soldiers

Returning soldiers brought a new attitude back to Africa. Their influence was soon seen in the demobilisation camps where they were responsible for strikes and uprisings. It was also seen in ensuing attacks on the authority of traditional chiefs. New vistas were opened up by the war. For the educated elite, too, it became the stimulation, if not for nationalism, then at least for more critical attitudes towards the colonial masters. As another missionary, James Dexter Taylor, detected in 1919, 'throughout the length and breadth of Africa [there was] the throb of the same great hopes that the war brought to other peoples'. Taylor believed that the Africans were instrumental in the Allied victory, not only through their military contribution, but also because they rejected Turkish and German overtures to draw them into an Islamic jihad. This, according to Taylor, entitled the African to 'new and larger ideas of the rest of the world, and his ambitions are awokened as never before'.<sup>42</sup> Soon this surfaced in demands for participation in the government processes – in the state systems that the colonial rulers had imposed upon them during the partition of the continent.

It was not only Africa that was changing. The war brought new perspectives on the continent to her colonial rulers and it is to this that attention must now be given.

#### Notes

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- 2 A. A. Boahen, *African perspectives on colonialism*, pp. 33–34.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 66–67.
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- 5 A. A. Boahen, *African perspectives*, pp. 34–35.
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- 13 M. H. Y. Kaniki, 'The colonial economy: The former British zones', in Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. VII, p. 390.
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- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 411.
- 16 Crowder, *West Africa*, p. 423, and D. C. Dorward, 'British West Africa and Liberia', in A. D. Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7, *From 1905 to 1940*, p. 410.
- 17 Wesley Johnson Jr, *The emergence of black politics*, p. 23.
- 18 G. Wesley Johnson, 'The impact of the Senegalese elite upon the French, 1900–1940', in G. Wesley Johnson (ed.), *Double impact: France and Africa in the age of imperialism*, pp. 153 and 155.
- 19 Wesley Johnson Jr, *The emergence of black politics*, pp. 124–125.
- 20 Wesley Johnson, 'The impact of the Senegalese elite upon the French', in G. Wesley Johnson (ed.), *Double impact*, p. 158.
- 21 Wesley Johnson Jr, *The emergence of black politics*, p. 149.
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- 23 P. J. Vatikiotis, *The history of modern Egypt from Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*, p. 176.
- 24 J. C. B. Richmond, *Egypt 1798–1952: Her advance towards a modern identity*, pp. 60–61.
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- 29 M. Crowder, 'The First World War and its consequences', in Boahen (ed.), *Unesco general history of Africa*, vol. VII, p. 292.
- 30 M. E. Page (ed.), *Africa and the First World War*, p. 8.
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- 37 Page, 'Introduction: Black men in a white men's war', in Page (ed.), *Africa and the First World War*, p. 14.
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- 41 Quoted in M. E. Page (ed.), *Africa and the First World War*, pp. 18–19.
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# 13

## ***Colonialism in the inter-war years***

**Review** The inter-war years were characterised by changed views about imperialism and colonialism. This did not imply any form of self-government or independence for the colonies in Africa: the European powers remained firmly in control, but they accepted a different responsibility towards their colonies that found expression in concepts such as paramountcy, the dual mandate, partnership, association and paternalism. Africa began to show budget surpluses and more funds became available for education, health, veterinary services and agricultural development. Coordinated systems of control, in which the various colonial territories were governed and developed with increasing uniformity, began to make their appearance.

**Old claims** This period also witnessed a belated expression of aggressive military imperialism when Mussolini's Fascist Italy conquered Ethiopia while Britain and France stood on the sidelines, doing little to prevent it. European political interests, in which the rise of Nazi Germany featured prominently, prevented effective action being taken through the League of Nations. Germany was unable to regain her colonies. Under Hitler the demand for the return of these colonies was given added impetus by plans to settle surplus population there and thus strengthen the economy of the Third Reich.

## REACTION AGAINST COLONIALISM IN EUROPE

**German inability to defend colonies**

When the First World War broke out, the German colonies realised that the British fleet would prevent them from obtaining any support from the mother country, so they attempted to have the colonial territories declared neutral. The British were quick to reject this proposal while the French saw the war as an opportunity of regaining the territory they had been obliged to relinquish to Germany during the Moroccan crisis in 1912. The Allies' first objectives were the seizure of German ports and the destruction of her wireless stations. After the British had eliminated Von Spee's squadron in the vicinity of the Falkland Islands in December 1914, the Germans were able to do little more than undertake a series of delaying actions in Africa. The realisation of Germany's Mittelafrica dream could thus be achieved only by victory in Europe. Its African colonies were really indefensible; they were cut off from the mother country by superior seapower, their tiny local German populations were for the most part surrounded by Allied territories and their garrisons, although well trained, were small.

**Anti-German propaganda**

Allied propaganda depicted Germany as an aggressive and expansionist power, while their own war effort was portrayed as being concerned with values such as freedom and democracy. From 1915 the Germans were also accused of inhuman exploitation in their colonies, and this meant that these possessions could not possibly be returned to them after the war – hence the division of Togo and Kamerun between Britain and France shortly after they had been captured.

**Colonies in East and southern Africa**

In German East Africa, General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck delayed any Allied takeover and was undefeated when the war in Europe ended, but Belgium had taken Ruanda and South Africa occupied German South West Africa. Both Belgium and South Africa expected to be rewarded with these territories for their sacrifices and services for the Allied cause and Britain wanted to claim German South West Africa as part of its empire.

**Lenin and anti-imperialism**

Unfortunately for the Allies, the secret agreements they had concluded on the disposal of the German colonies coincided with the publication in Zurich in 1916 of Lenin's booklet *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism*. In this, he condemned the war as an imperialist struggle to bring about a redivision of colonies and spheres of influence for capital investment. This was a setback to the plans laid by the Allies and it was soon followed by another propaganda blow dealt by Lenin. On 8 November 1917 he issued a peace decree in which he made a plea *inter alia* for the liberation of the colonies. The publication in December of the secret Allied agreements for the partitioning of the German colonies was yet another embarrassment to the Allies. Many people began to wonder whether Lenin's allegations that the war had been fought for capitalist gain did not indeed contain a measure of truth. Tension and contradictions developed in attitudes towards imperialism and colonialism, which meant that the Allies faced a credibility crisis.

**French, British views**

Anti-imperialist groups were also active in the United States, while the British Labour Party, the French Socialists and the French advocates of the League of Nations (such as the League of Intellectual Solidarity for the Triumph of the International Cause,

founded in 1918) expressed their opposition to the outright annexation of the former German colonies. It was from this anti-imperialist feeling that the idea of international control of colonies arose. In a speech delivered on 5 January 1918 the British prime minister, David Lloyd George, condemned annexationist imperialism and spoke out in favour of the principle of national self-determination for the former German colonies. This was a revolutionary idea aimed at preventing the exploitation of the indigenous races of Africa by European capitalists and governments. By putting forward this view, Lloyd George hoped to dispel the suspicion that the Allies were merely fighting for the division of the colonial spoils.

- Wilson's Fourteen Points** A few days later, on 8 January, the American president, Woodrow Wilson, delivered his renowned speech which outlined a peace plan in his Fourteen Points. Point five, among other things, put forward the view that there should be 'a free, openminded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined'.<sup>1</sup> This declaration was made in all sincerity by a man who was steeped in eighteenth-century philanthropic ideas. He believed that governments obtained their authority from the consent of those whom they governed, and that no country was unfit for self-government if this was granted in a reasonable way. But the point was very vaguely defined. Wilson implied that the right of conquest did not automatically grant the right to rule and that there was no place in the colonial connection for exploitation, but he did not explain how the colonial claims of the victors were to be satisfied. Although he hoped to prevent the German colonies from being annexed and wanted them placed under the trusteeship of the League of Nations, he did not clarify the way in which the status of the colonies should be changed. This ambiguity should be seen in relation to the actual claims of the Allies for colonial compensation, however. It was an attempt to effect a compromise between self-government and annexation. A month later the Inter-Allied Labour Conference spoke out strongly against imperialism, but public opinion in the Allied countries was not prepared to accept Wilson's proposals unreservedly. Various French organisations such as the French Colonial League and the National Advisory Committee for Foreign Trade were opposed to international trusteeship because they feared that this could later be extended to all colonial possessions. Wilson's ideas did not enjoy general acceptance.

## THE EVENTUAL FATE OF THE GERMAN COLONIES

By October 1918 it was clear that a peace treaty based on Wilson's Fourteen Points was a distinct reality, and the Fourteen Points attracted new attention as the Allies defined their aims for peace more clearly. Wilson wanted to turn the German colonies into international property and use them to tie the Allies to the League of Nations.<sup>2</sup> He succeeded in meeting Belgium's objection to any interference with the integrity of her colonies, and calmed British and French fears by assuring them that all colonial questions would be reconsidered. Wilson made it clear that point five was applicable only to former German colonies, which would not be returned to that country. Germany

protested on the grounds that the Fourteen Points had expressly denied the conquerors the automatic right to rule. Later, this unwillingness to return her colonies led to repeated demands on the part of post-war German writers who reacted to the Allied war propaganda and pleaded for the return of Germany's former colonies.

#### **League of Nations and trustee-ship**

In Wilson's proposed new dispensation, the interests of the indigenous population were of cardinal importance. To safeguard these interests the territories were not to be militarised, there was to be an open door as regards their economic policy, taxes and labour policies were to be strictly controlled, and local customs were to be respected. Wilson considered it advisable that some of the world's smaller but stable powers should act as trustees with the League of Nations as the chief guardian. These states had to be experienced enough to prevent corruption and to be in possession of adequate funds and capable officials to implement their obligations. The trustees would act in the interests of the inhabitants and the international community, for colonial administration was a matter of international concern. The whole system revolved around the League of Nations; meanwhile the claimants to the German colonies waited for Wilson to recognise their claims – which, in effect, amounted to a re-partition without the help of the United States.

#### **Smuts and international control**

The parties were thus clearly divided and a compromise was necessary. This came from General Jan Smuts whose remarkable book *The League of Nations: A practical suggestion* was published on 16 December 1918. Smuts's solution was based on an idea that originated within the British Labour Party and the Round Table, a forum for British imperial idealism. Smuts proposed a scheme for the international control of territories formerly belonging to Russia, Austria-Hungary and Turkey. Two of the principles included here referred to 'no annexations and the self-determination of nations'. International control or a mandate system was regarded as a temporary system which would lead to self-government and self-determination. But as far as the colonial territories in Africa were concerned, Smuts advocated direct annexation because he was strongly opposed to any suggestion of restoration to Germany. He wrote that 'The German colonies in the Pacific and Africa are inhabited by barbarians who not only possibly cannot govern themselves, but to whom it would be impractical to apply any ideas of political self determination in the European sense ... The disposal of these colonies would be decided on the principles which President Wilson has laid down in the fifth of his celebrated Fourteen points.'<sup>3</sup>

Smuts, strongly supported by Australia and New Zealand,<sup>4</sup> evidently did not intend his suggestions to be applied to the former German colonies in Africa and the Pacific Ocean, since it was generally accepted that these would be annexed by the occupying states. In his draft of the League Covenant, published on 10 January 1919, Wilson enlarged upon Smuts's scheme and made a number of significant modifications to make it more universal. He made a strong plea for his plan to be applied generally to the distant possessions of the defeated powers.

#### **Mandate system**

At the peace conference, Wilson's proposals clashed directly with Allied aspirations as reflected in their secret agreements. Turkish possessions and the German colonies in

Africa had been divided between Britain and France but, in terms of Wilson's principles, there would not be outright annexation, as this would defeat the purpose of the League of Nations, which held a central position in the dispensation Wilson saw as his goal. Direct incorporation was also contrary to the idealism that had characterised Allied war aims, and to pledges made during the war to certain local leaders, notably in Arabia. Complete independence for these regions had never been seriously contemplated, and since the secret treaties had already provided for the disposal of these areas, the fate of the German colonies (insignificant in the light of the pressing European problems) was decided in the most rapid decision taken at the Paris Peace Conference.

#### Out-right annexation

The French and British governments continued to favour outright annexation of the former German territories. In order to obtain the consent of the Allies to the mandate system, Wilson ignored German pleas to restore its colonies or to proclaim it a mandatory power,<sup>5</sup> and agreed to the division of the territories as planned in the secret treaties. He also made concessions to the French, who wished to continue with recruitment of soldiers in Africa, and to the British dominions on the 'open door' since they sought to close their territories to foreign trade and immigration. Wilson's proposals, which had been designed to strengthen the League's authority over such mandates, had been whittled away by the British and the French, leaving no real difference between colonies and mandated areas.

#### Objectives of the mandate system

Jan Smuts and Philip Kerr, editor of *The Round Table* and former member of Milner's 'Kindergarten', formulated the objectives of the mandate system in Article XXII of the League Covenant. This declared that 'in those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant'.<sup>6</sup>

#### Mandated territories

After Germany had formally renounced its right to its colonies, the Allies appointed mandatories or mandate holders. Britain received part of Togo and the Cameroons as B-mandates and governed these as integral parts of the Gold Coast and Nigeria. At the same time the Allies moved the boundaries of the territories eastwards to bring them into line with the traditional borders that had existed before the partitioning. France, who was in favour of annexation, consulted the traditional elite of the regions it had conquered from Germany. They preferred France to stay, and it took over much of Togo including Lomé and the railways as well as that part of the Cameroons it had yielded to Germany in 1911, which it re-annexed to French Equatorial Africa.<sup>7</sup> With regard to German East Africa, matters were aggravated by the uncertainty of the territory's future status. Until January 1919 it was under joint British and Belgian control and the British were reluctant to take over the whole country as this might underline the suspicion that existed in certain areas that it was in the war only for the spoils it could grab. Control of the south was therefore initially offered to Italy and when it refused, it was offered to the United States. Only after the Americans had also rejected the suggestion did the

British, on the insistence of Smuts, agree to take over the territory as a B-mandate, from then known as Tanganyika.

#### **German South West Africa**

The Belgians took control of Ruanda and Urundi in 1919 and administered the regions as integral parts of the Congo. Much uncertainty and soul-searching surrounded the future status of German South West Africa. G. L. Beer was of the opinion that the territory was so dependent on South Africa that it could not qualify as a mandated territory. In 1919 Lloyd George expressed the same opinion when he said that the territory ought to be administered as an integral part of the Union of South Africa. Some prospective mandatories doubted whether they could establish effective forms of government in these regions, but South Africa felt that it could make its mandate (which was designated a C-mandate) effective. At the Peace Conference in Paris, Wilson also expressed the hope that the Union would administer the territory in such a way that the population would subsequently ask for incorporation.<sup>9</sup> South West Africa was formally transferred to the Union in 1919, and Wilson's wish brought to the fore the first of many problems concerning the status of this territory. Smuts was unwilling to administer South West Africa formally as a fifth province of the Union, and declared that the League of Nations had nothing to do with the granting of the mandate to South Africa. The Allies agreed with Smuts and according to them, the relationship between the Union and South West Africa included everything short of annexation, a view which was rejected by the Permanent Mandates Committee.

## **THE IDEA OF TRUSTEESHIP**

#### **Trusteeship**

Trusteeship was essentially a British idea and was a direct outcome of the war, which had changed the attitude of the colonial powers towards their African colonies. Circumstances had placed heavy demands on the human and material resources of the African colonies. France had relied heavily on Africa as a source of troops while the British Colonial Office had had to deal with increasing pressure from the War Office to make more extensive use of blacks as soldiers in the East African campaign. Dependence upon African products increased too. Imports of raw material from sub-Saharan Africa grew from 2 per cent between 1909 and 1913 to 4.3 per cent between 1919 and 1923, and the colonial governments also had a small share in paying the cost of the war.<sup>10</sup> Africa's contribution to the Allied war effort and the common experience of the horrors of war influenced the image of the European as seen by their colonial subjects. It also brought Africans and Europeans closer together and created a feeling of obligation towards the Africans in European circles. This sentiment resulted in the trusteeship idea which was embodied in the mandates system.

#### **Aims of system**

Since the African mandates were regarded as being incapable of independence, their wellbeing was declared to be 'a sacred trust of civilisation' and the mandatories were pledged to suppress slavery, the slave trade and the use of forced labour for private gain. The use of African manpower to strengthen their armed forces was also forbidden and there was to be an open door policy for Christian missions and for trade with members of the League of Nations, except in the case of South West Africa. No monopolies or concessions could be granted for the purposes of trade. Furthermore, the

mandatory powers were urged to promote the material and moral wellbeing and the social progress of the inhabitants.

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These aims were vague. In terms of its covenant, the council of the League of Nations held the authority to ensure the proper implementation of the mandates, and in 1921 a Permanent Mandates Commission was appointed to monitor events and to advise the council on all matters relating to the exercise of the mandates. Its inherent weakness was the absence of any power to intervene directly in any of the mandatory areas. Nevertheless, it represented a reassertion of the spirit that had prevailed at the anti-slavery conference at Brussels in 1890 and during the campaign against the Congo Free State early in the twentieth century. With the First World War the era of overt imperialism disappeared and a new era dawned, aimed at creating peace and economic development. The colonial powers struggled with problems related to the government of their recently conquered 'tropical dependencies' – regions considered unfit for European settlement. Colonialism was seen as an 'act of humanity' in which the colonial subjects had to be guided into the modern, technically advanced world, centred upon a market-oriented economy.<sup>11</sup> Emphasis was placed on the protective role of the trustee and trusteeship gradually acquired a deeper significance which had a decisive influence on the formulation of colonial policy.

Lugard, who exchanged his role of colonial administrator for a seat on the Permanent Mandates Commission, propagated the new approach in his book *The dual mandate in British Tropical Africa* (1922). In France, Albert Sarraut, minister of colonies between 1920 and 1924 and again from 1932 to 1933, also gave expression to the new spirit in his *Mise en valeur des colonies françaises*.

**Lugard  
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Lugard's book, which became a source of inspiration for many people, emphasised moral and material progress for the colonial communities as well as development towards self-government. In addition, the colonial power had to develop the natural resources of the colonies in such a way that the outside world could also benefit. There should be a proper balance between the two facets and to ensure this the colonial people should do as much as possible for themselves. Lugard thus applied the recognised principles of British colonial administration and adapted them in accordance with the new spirit. He recommended that indirect rule, as he had applied it in Nigeria in earlier years, should be used, and this remained an important element of British policy right up to the outbreak of the Second World War. In the economic sphere his preference was for free enterprise but, because the kind of development he envisaged demanded capital investment, Lugard realised that outside companies would also have to be given access to trade in order to supplement local colonial capabilities.

**Sar-  
raut's  
*Mise en  
valeur***

Like Lugard, Sarraut believed that colonialism would continue far into the future, but he did not share the concern of his British counterpart for the individual colonial subject. As in the past, there was no question of blacks developing along their own lines. Eventual self-government as envisaged by the British had no place in French thinking. Revised French policy tended instead to focus on association or parallel development and the emphasis fell particularly on economic reform, partly as a result of the unfa-

vourable economic situation in France after the war. As a source of raw materials and a market for the products of the mother country the empire would help to compensate France for the economic losses it had suffered in the war. In his *Mise en valeur* Sarraut had in mind a rise in the value of nature, the land and the people. Each colony had to concentrate on the systematic development of the products for which it was particularly suited. France and its colonies were closely bound in an economic union protected by tariff walls and Sarraut called for investment in colonial infrastructures to boost production. *Mise en valeur* also implied a rise in human values, and here it was envisaged that France would replace the exploitation of one race by another with a policy of mutual association. This approach towards economic and human values meant that association and assimilation, two basic principles in the French colonial system, featured prominently in French Africa in the inter-war years.

#### The Belgians

The Belgians were able to make a start with the intensive development of the Congo only after 1920, which at that stage had been united with the mandated territories Ruanda and Urundi. After the takeover from Leopold II, the Belgians, the reluctant owners, were confronted with enormous problems. As a people without a colonial tradition, they had to find an acceptable system that would free the inhabitants from the poor conditions they had endured during the reign of Leopold and the Congo Free State. Since the Belgians had never made a formal policy declaration, their policy can be described as 'a response to factors'.<sup>12</sup> During the war the Belgian attitude towards colonies changed. In the spirit that prevailed after the war, and as trustees of their colonies, the Belgians planned to create a highly developed European industrial state in Africa. The dominance of economic and social motives led to a strongly paternalistic attitude and careful supervision was exercised over the administration with a clear emphasis on primary education. Like the British and the French, the Belgians believed that the colonial era would endure indefinitely and that there would be more than enough time in which to realise their aims.

#### Portuguese colonies

In the Portuguese colonies the tendency towards decentralisation and greater freedom for the colonies that began when Portugal became a republic in 1910 did not change as a result of the war. A change came only after 1926, when the republic fell and a new dispensation was established in the thirties. In the immediate post-war period, Portuguese attention was devoted to efforts to stimulate the national economy while the Estado Novo or New State that evolved in the 1930s brought closer centralisation; the emphasis fell on strengthening the colonial mystique and the value of the past, all with an eye to the significance of this for Portugal's future. The foundation of developments that followed in the fifties was laid in this period.<sup>13</sup>

## BRITISH ATTEMPTS AT COLONIAL CONSOLIDATION

#### Imperial ambitions

Although the First World War saved Portugal's African empire by preventing the suggested Anglo-German plan to divide the Portuguese colonies between them, paradoxically the war also gave new scope to empire-building. The weakening of British and French economic power in relation to that of the United States convinced the British government of the value of imperial links whether with the dominions or with depend-

ent territories on the African continent. Lord Milner, who joined the British War Cabinet in 1916 and became colonial secretary three years later, regarded the empire as the engine of economic growth and called for investment to boost production, but economic conditions were unfavourable for official investment of this nature. Instead the Treasury encouraged private enterprise, a tendency which the Colonial Office opposed. This did not deter the pursuance of imperial ambitions on the political plane. The disappearance of Germany from the continent spelt the end of the German Mittelafrica Deutsch dream and gave new hope to British imperialist dreamers about the possibility of controlling Mozambique.

**Lord  
Milner**

Milner was at the helm of these efforts. He allowed the British shipping company Union Castle to acquire confiscated German shares as a subsidiary of the already largely British-financed Niassa Company which ruled in the north of Mozambique. He also allowed the British-dominated Mozambique Company to finance a railway line between Beira and Nyasaland in an effort to boost British influence in an area where there was the suspicion of commercial designs on the part of American companies. When Britain accepted the mandate over Tanganyika the road was opened for the creation of a British dominion stretching from the Limpopo to the borders of Ethiopia. The Rhodesias and Kenya were regions of white settlement to which such schemes could be linked and they formed the key to this vision.

**Southern  
Rhodesia**

When the charter of the British South Africa Company approached expiry, the company chose to terminate the charter and began to negotiate the terms for a transfer. Winston Churchill, who succeeded Milner at the Colonial Office, agreed with the South African premier, J. C. Smuts, that Southern Rhodesia should be incorporated into the Union of South Africa as it could become a counterweight to the influence of nationalist Afrikaners in the Union. Imbued with the same dreams which had motivated the imperialist Cecil Rhodes, Smuts paid Southern Rhodesia a visit to try to influence the outcome of the referendum in which Rhodesia's white voters were to decide the question of incorporation into South Africa. He tried to lure them with an attractive offer, including ten seats in the Union parliament and five in the senate; there would be a Rhodesian provincial council with 20 members while the Union would take over their railways, public works, crown land and debt of R14 000 000. Because the Rhodesians were keen to undertake development projects, but were loath to pay for these, Smuts offered them a special annual grant of R1 000 000 for ten years.<sup>14</sup> But the white Rhodesians indicated their preference for self-government by a majority of 2 775 votes. A governor was appointed in Southern Rhodesia and a parliament of 30 members was elected, but the imperial government retained control over external affairs and reserved the right to veto legislation affecting Africans. Southern Rhodesia was thus granted partial dominion status, substantiated by its participation in imperial conferences.

**Northern  
Rhodesia**

The position in Northern Rhodesia was different. In 1899 Milner regarded this region as being beyond the frontiers of British-dominated southern Africa. During the 1920s things began to change and as limited white settlement occurred, Northern Rhodesia's role as a labour reservoir for mines in other countries was replaced by the development of mining within the region itself. After 1924 rich deposits of sulphide ore were

discovered near the Katangan border. The growing international demand for minerals after the depression stimulated production and the Copperbelt developed rapidly. Its potential to serve imperial ends as a link in the chain of white settlements in southern, central and eastern Africa became obvious. It was too soon to think in terms of self-government, since only 3 600 whites had settled there by 1925. The Colonial Office took control when Northern Rhodesia was granted crown colony rule and protectorate status and its first governor initiated plans to encourage white settlement. Although the region experienced some constitutional growth, self-government on the Southern Rhodesian pattern was not even considered for the time being.

- Kenya** In Kenya Milner supported white aspirations to the full and granted them a large unofficial majority in the colony's legislative council, while the much larger Indian community received only one member nominated by the governor. The Indians protested against this, and in reply the whites insisted on further curtailment of Indian rights, the reservation of the White Highlands for themselves, the restriction or termination of Indian immigration, residential and commercial segregation, the prohibition of fixed property ownership rights or employment service for Indians, and a denial of voting rights. These demands had to be weighed up against the significance of India's participation in the war, which had enhanced its world standing immensely. In 1917 the Imperial War Cabinet recognised its equality with the other dominions, and at the Imperial Conference of 1921 it took a definite stand on Kenya's Indians not being denied any position for which they were considered fit, on account of their race, colour or creed.

- The Devonshire White Paper** Compromise on these views was impossible, but the sympathy the whites enjoyed in London waned somewhat after 1922 when Churchill replaced Milner at the Colonial Office. Churchill wanted to bring Kenya to representative self-government in accordance with the pattern that was emerging in British colonial policy, and he made it clear that the principle that all civilised people should have equal rights was to apply and that Indians and Africans who met the required standards would not be denied citizenship or political rights.<sup>15</sup> New plans for Indian representation alarmed the Europeans and they plotted rebellion. Meanwhile, delegations of both race groups held talks in London, but the political climate took a further turn against the whites with the Kenyan government's labour policy and the appointment of the Duke of Devonshire as colonial secretary. He formulated the principle of paramountcy in the Devonshire White Paper in 1923. According to this declaration, Kenya belonged to the blacks, and in future the British government would give preference to their interests when these clashed with the interests of any other race group. This was perhaps a reassertion of the Colonial Office's authority at the expense of the settlers and the authority of the India Office which championed the cause of the region's Indian population.

In terms of the Devonshire White Paper Britain claimed the role of guardian of black interests, a situation the Europeans and Indians simply had to accept. The Colonial Office remained cautious in exercising this responsibility both in Kenya and in Northern Rhodesia and any form of confrontation with the settlers was carefully avoided. Kenya thus played a central role in the British government's plans to consolidate its

own position and that of the white settlers in these parts of Africa. In 1924 the Labour government investigated the possibility of a coordinate policy in the region and also worked towards the improvement of the conditions suffered by the Africans. The Conservatives, however, dominated the proceedings of the parliamentary commission dealing with this matter and when the Labour government's short term of office ended, the new colonial secretary was Leopold Amery, who in 1919 declared that 'parliament was "in a position of trustee" to the peoples of the colonial empire'.<sup>16</sup> The chairman of the same parliamentary commission, W. G. Ormsby-Gore, worked with Amery to create a dominion in East Africa until the end of Amery's tenure at the Colonial Office in 1929.

**Moves  
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Economic development was behind many of Amery's efforts. In 1926 he formed a marketing board and arranged that money be loaned to East Africa for transport purposes. The marketing board then made money available for scientific research in an effort to stimulate British exports and employment. The emergence of a white dominion in East Africa was of special concern to Amery, and from 1926 the governors of East Africa met regularly in Nairobi to discuss ways of bringing about a closer union. In 1927 he sent the Hilton Young Commission to East Africa to report on the possibility of such a move. This caused great concern among all the population groups of the area. The whites felt that, in such a union, they would be completely swamped by the blacks, and there was a recurrence of white agitation for constitutional reform that would provide some form of self-protection. Sir Edward Grigg, Kenya's governor, who sympathised with the ideas of the Round Table (an organisation seeking to promote closer links between populations of British origin and culture around the world), gave intellectual weight to the belief in Britain's ability to govern other races by proposing a federal plan in 1927. In terms of this proposal, the Kenyan legislative council would have a non-official majority.

**Opposi-  
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Strong opposition to this came from the Indians, whose campaign of non-cooperation against the decisions made in 1922 had continued right up until 1927. There was also African opposition and even the British government was critical – claiming that it could not reconcile such a step with its role as trustee of black interests. Instead, the Hilton Young Commission suggested a union of the three territories under a governor-general. Although the Permanent Mandates Commission favoured regional consolidation, it had serious reservations about joining a mandated territory, Tanganyika, with the two crown colonies of Kenya and Uganda in a political union. Moreover Tanganyika's governor, Sir Donald Cameron, vehemently opposed the idea. These setbacks and the fall of the Conservative government in 1929 seriously retarded the cause of closer union, while the advent of the depression in the thirties changed the focus to economic affairs. A customs union was instituted and this was followed by a postal union in 1933.

## WHITE SETTLERS IN AFRICA

The presence of European settlers was central to the efforts of the British government to consolidate her colonies in Central and East Africa, and the apparent success of settlement in southern Africa encouraged Europeans to settle in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa where a temperate climate made settlement feasible. When Euro-

pean rule reached its climax in Africa about the 1950s, more than five million Europeans lived in Africa. North of the Limpopo they were most numerous in Algeria, where their numbers reached the million mark. On the continent as a whole this was a minute 10 per cent of Africa's population. Most of the whites lived in South Africa, and it was from that region that they expanded into Rhodesia as part of Cecil John Rhodes's plan to extend British influence north of the Limpopo and to curb the extension of Afrikaner influence there.

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After the whites of Southern Rhodesia had rejected closer union with the Union of South Africa, partly because they feared Afrikaner domination, their continued existence hung in the balance. Leopold Amery gave special attention to Southern Rhodesia when he visited the dominions between 1926 and 1927 and tried to boost white settlement there. The decision not to unite with its southern neighbour implied a heavy financial burden for the Rhodesians. They became responsible for the compensation the Colonial Office owed the British South Africa Company (BSAC) for its administrative costs and after 1933 were also obliged to buy out the company's remaining mining royalties. Furthermore, the trade recession of the thirties contributed to Rhodesia's financial problems. This discouraged immigration from Europe and in the two decades between 1921 and 1941 only 18 000 immigrants settled in the country.

**Malawi**

The Central African Protectorate (Nyassaland) or present-day Malawi was another region regarded as suitable for white residence, but settlement remained small: in 1921 only 400 farmers – most of whom cultivated tea and cotton – lived in the colony. This factor and the slow construction of railways, which impeded the export trade, retarded economic growth and the reservation of the region for whites was abandoned in 1930.

**Pro-  
ducts**

In contrast, the economy in Southern Rhodesia began to prosper with the exploitation of gold, asbestos and other base metals. Cattle and tobacco farming also brought progress in the agricultural sector. Mining formed the backbone of the economy in Northern Rhodesia, but the accompanying prosperity was limited to the Copperbelt while the rest of the colony remained economically backward.

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The economic growth of Southern Rhodesia demanded more labour than the colony's African population could provide and the shortage was supplemented with labour from the two neighbouring colonies. This created an economic interdependence, since Northern Rhodesia and Nyassaland provided much-needed labour and created a worthwhile market for Southern Rhodesian manufacturers. The railway system of the two Rhodesias was closely integrated while Northern Rhodesia's copper mines depended upon coal from their neighbour for their power needs. As early as 1915 there was talk of amalgamating the three regions, and two years later the BSAC unsuccessfully tried to bring Southern and Northern Rhodesia together. In both colonies the whites opposed the idea. Northern Rhodesia feared that the government in Salisbury would neglect them, while the whites in the south were afraid of the possibility of being dominated by the large number of blacks from north of the Zambezi River.

**Amalgamation** In 1930 this position changed. When the Colonial Office accepted the paramountcy of black interests as a principle of policy, the attitude of Northern Rhodesian whites towards the Europeans in its colonies in eastern and central Africa changed. Initially embodied in the Devonshire White Paper and limited to Kenya, paramountcy was extended to other parts of British Africa with the Passfield Memorandum in 1929. The primacy given to the blacks provoked an immediate review of the idea of a white dominion in Central Africa. In 1935 tentative proposals were made either for the amalgamation of the two Rhodesias under a constitution conferring complete self-government or for the federation of the three British territories in central Africa. In 1938 a commission chaired by Lord Bledisloe examined the feasibility of closer union in central Africa.

**The Bledisloe Commission** Although Bledisloe himself favoured closer cooperation and recognised the sound economic grounds for amalgamation, the commission's report, published in 1929, regarded this step as a long-term objective that was not immediately feasible. As grounds for its view the commission cited the differing policies towards blacks, the different levels of constitutional status, the small white population in Northern Rhodesian, and the opposition of the black residents of Northern Rhodesia, which was aimed mainly at their dislike of Southern Rhodesia's native policy. The commission had no objection to the amalgamation of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland as soon as was possible, and it also suggested informal coordination with Southern Rhodesia. The outbreak of the Second World War prevented any action being taken on these recommendations.

**Kenyan land and labour problems** In the twenties less than one third of the about 10 000 Europeans who lived in Kenya practised farming. Their presence, in fact, created a land and labour problem that plagued the colony in the inter-war years. With the exception of the Highlands, Kenya is a barren country and the sparse African population on these highlands created a favourable opportunity for the European settlement which was required to make an East African railway a viable proposition. The fact that the land was largely unpopulated did not imply that it lay barren and unused. Epidemics, famine and Masai raiding were all reasons for the small permanent population on the grasslands which were used periodically for grazing. Further to the north, large farming communities, including the Kikuyu, were protected from the Masai by some belts of forest. Once Western medicine had put an end to the epidemics and the raiding by the Masai had been checked by the presence of the white government, the number of settlers began to increase. Through the expropriation of land, whites were able to secure farms on 999-year leases with favourable terms, and this brought them into direct confrontation with blacks who were also experiencing the need for additional land. In 1904 the first two reserves were set aside for the Masai while the Kikuyu obtained one in 1906, to be followed by reserves for three other tribes. The government also laid down that Indians would henceforth not be allowed to obtain land on the White Highlands. These measures caused dissatisfaction among Indian and black residents alike.

**Labour** Measures to satisfy the labour requirements of the Europeans also followed and Sir Charles Eliot discouraged independent indigenous agriculture so that blacks could

work on white farms. In 1906 a Master and Servant Law was introduced to regulate labour relations, and recruiting campaigns were soon followed by coercive measures such as a hut and head tax. In order to retain the right to live on a white farm, squatters had to supply labour and these measures sparked resistance which was accelerated by the First World War.

**Division of land** The land issue remained acute in the inter-war years and, although African land rights received statutory recognition as 'native reserves' in 1915, the Soldiers Settlement Scheme of 1920 resulted in blacks losing a further 12 810 km<sup>2</sup> of land. The Crown Lands Ordinance of 1924 set aside 124 000 ha of crown land as reserves, and in 1926 this was increased by the addition of land on the Ugandan highlands. The Native Trust Ordinance of 1930, in terms of which land expropriated for public purposes was to be replaced by land to the same value elsewhere, served as a kind of Magna Carta for black land rights. The Kenya Lands Commission of 1934 added another 40 000 km<sup>2</sup> to the existing 80 000 km<sup>2</sup> of reserves, but despite this, some 60 000 Kikuyu were still without land. This contrasted with the 44 000 km<sup>2</sup> of land to which the whites laid claim. The density of population in the reserves grew steadily while the whites were far too few and far too devoid of resources to utilise all of the land reserved for them. This gave some Kikuyu the opportunity to use the European settlers as a barrier against the Masai and these Kikuyu settled on the highlands as squatters.<sup>17</sup>

**Algerian land problems** In Algeria, in the Maghrib, a land problem similar to that in Kenya developed as a result of European settlement. The French conquest drove the Algerians from the coastal plains and valleys and the lands thus vacated were given to individual settlers or companies. Here the production of grain crops made way for cash crops such as wine, cotton and tobacco, and eventually about 27 000 km<sup>2</sup> of land, a small proportion of Algeria's total surface, was set aside in this manner. However small (the remaining habitable area extended over about 200 000 km<sup>2</sup>), the alienated region included a high proportion of arable land with adequate rainfall. Before the outbreak of the First World War, some 3 200 km of railway lines were built in the European area, allowing the transport of their produce for export or local consumption and the export of the iron and phosphates that had been discovered since the 1870s. As was the case in Kenya, the indigenous population increased rapidly, doubling itself in the half century after 1879. This caused a crisis. Deprived of good access to markets, capital and the best land, living standards dropped and the result was increased urbanisation – where jobs were not readily available. In 1911 only some 80 000 Algerians could find jobs in local industries.

**Demographic structure** The constitutional arrangements introduced in Algeria after 1871 favoured the white or colon population. Algeria then ceased to be exclusively a military responsibility and, with the exception of some sparsely populated frontier lands facing the Sahara, the country was divided into three large départements. In 1881 it was decided to govern these regions as part of France since the European settlers were opposed to military rule. This ignored the fact that the colons were outnumbered about seven to one by the indigenous people, who were Muslims and not French. Many of the colons were not French either, but immigrants from Spain, Italy and Malta who had gained naturalisation. Another component of the population was the 50 000 Jews who were naturalised

after 1870 but remained unassimilated. Economically the interests of the colons were also at odds with fellow farmers in France since they grew wine and grain in competition with one another.

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The presence of the large unassimilated population – especially the Jews, who sparked a wave of anti-Semitism – led to a major constitutional change in 1898 when the country was placed under a governor-general and given its own annual budget. An elected assembly had to approve the budget. This body consisted of 24 elected French citizens and 21 representatives of the native Algerians, some of whom were indirectly elected and some nominated. The governor-general was advised by an upper council, of which half the members were officials or nominees while the others were elected. Some of the nominees and a minority of the elected members were Algerians. The Islamic population was totally opposed to any form of assimilation while the colons for their part rejected it because they wanted to retain and secure their privileged position. They therefore opposed Georges Clemenceau's plans for extending citizenship to French Algerians who had been loyal to the fatherland during the First World War.<sup>18</sup> The result was an amelioration of the position of the French Algerians – it became easier for them to obtain citizenship and some were granted the right to vote in local districts with elected local councils based on the French model.

**Tunisia**

In Tunisia and Morocco, both French protectorates, the local rulers were still nominally in control, and France had to act in the name of these indigenous rulers. Tunisia soon reaped the economic fruits of French control when the resulting security stimulated the mining of iron ore and phosphates, which were richer than the deposits in neighbouring Algeria. The northern part of Tunisia had the best agricultural potential in the Maghrib and individual tenure developed there. French expertise ensured that security of tenure was established, and this resulted in the arrival of Europeans and the inflow of capital and technology which revolutionised the production of cereals, vines and olives. Although the majority of the settlers were Italians, Maltese and Jews, with Frenchmen making up about half of the population, encouragement to become naturalised soon increased the number of French citizens. They occupied about a quarter of the area which was exploited by the French estate companies and the Tunisians maintained half of all arable land. Until the onset of the depression in the 1930s, Europeans shared in the general prosperity and had little reason to challenge the bureaucratic and autocratic structure of the Tunisian government.

**Moroc-  
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In Morocco the French opened the coastal plains to economic agriculture and the mining of phosphates by building roads and railways to link the area with export markets. Coastal towns began to prosper despite the fact that economic exploitation had to be started from scratch. To facilitate this, settlers were encouraged to develop new crops, technology and industry. The settlers came from France and Algeria and although by the 1930s they numbered about 3 per cent of Morocco's total population, they did not impinge on Moroccan lands to any large degree. The economic development they pioneered enabled them to sustain a high standard of living.

**Other settlements**

Italians settled in Libya between 1911 and 1942 while Portugal tried in vain to promote immigration to its African colonies in the inter-war years – many Portuguese emigrants preferred to go to Brazil instead. In contrast, the Belgian government restricted white settlement to the Congo, because it wished to protect the indigenous population from competition in both the economic and labour spheres. Whites had to fulfil certain requirements before they were allowed to settle in the colony. Those working for the big companies had to have a job with the company in question as well as a fixed salary before they were allowed to immigrate. The small number of whites in the colony were thus in the service of the government, one of the large companies, or employed by the Roman Catholic missionaries. They held posts for which they were specially trained and which local inhabitants could not fill; they enjoyed no political rights and were highly paid – this type of rule was in accordance with the trusteeship principle.

**South West Africa**

When the Union of South Africa repatriated German officials, military personnel, undesirables and those who voluntarily chose to leave South West Africa, expectations of a return to pre-colonial times grew among the indigenous population. These were heightened by a proclamation to the effect that it was forbidden to acquire mineral or trading concessions from the indigenous population. But a return to pre-colonial times was out of the question. Some 6 374 Germans remained in the country and immigrants from the Union soon joined them. Some took up the posts formerly held by the Germans while others settled on the available agricultural land. By 1946, 37 858 whites lived in the country and various projects were undertaken to improve communications, to increase the scanty water resources, to fight disease and epidemics, and also to re-establish dispersed communities in their original areas. The immigrants from the Union enjoyed the backing of the South African government and were settled on crown land that the government had inherited from the Germans. From 1920 onwards attempts were made to create reserves for the indigenous groups, but the availability of land was a problem because the government wanted to give equal consideration to the interests of all population groups. The first 2 500 000 ha were delimited in 1925, but despite later additions, the reserves were incapable of supporting the population already settled there. This state of affairs forced many to find work on white farms or in the developing industries – something they were loath<sup>19</sup> to do.

**Tanganyika**

Tanganyika also saw a large deportation of German citizens which reduced their numbers by a half between 1913 and 1921. In this year some 2 447 whites lived in the territory, most of them making a living as farmers in the Arusha area near Mount Kilimanjaro. British settlers bought out former German properties, but no new land was alienated despite the fact that these whites and the Indian population expected preferential treatment from the government. Holding Tanganyika as a B-mandated area, the British government was responsible for ensuring just treatment for the indigenous population,<sup>20</sup> and it went to great lengths to prevent the same sort of trouble it had experienced in Kenya. In the late 1920s settlement was viewed in a more sympathetic fashion because normalisation of relations with Germany in 1925 had made it impossible to exclude German settlers. Admitting British emigrants to balance the German numbers resulted in an increase of the white population to 6 514 by 1939. The Germans, backed by their government, regained a great deal of land on Kilimanjaro and also in

the new settlements on the Southern Highlands and at Oldeani. The total area of land alienation was only 1.31 per cent of the colony, and right of occupancy was 99 years. As a mandated territory, Tanganyika was regarded as predominantly an African region, therefore settlement did not enjoy much direct official support.<sup>21</sup> In the spirit of the mandate, Tanganyika was regarded as a black man's country even as early as 1921, and it was planned to develop it along West African lines. Nigerian principles thus had an influence on land, law and administrative policy.<sup>22</sup> As was the case in the regions where Europeans did not settle, the interests of the indigenous population, interpreted by the colonial rulers as 'native policy', enjoyed preference.

### 'NATIVE POLICY'

**Implications** The revised views on colonialism that resulted from the First World War had certain implications for 'native policy' as well. Sarraut's *Mise en valeur des colonies françaises* officially sanctioned association as the French version of indirect rule, and theoretically it was also applied to all colonies south of the Sahara. In reality the French approach stood in stark contrast to that principle, and their preference for strong centralisation prevailed. The much-quoted view of Joost van Vollenhoven, governor-general of French West Africa, that the African chiefs have no power since there are only one authority in a 'cercle', accurately describes the position. The indigenous chief was merely an instrument used directly and subordinately by the French as an instrument of government.<sup>23</sup> The Portuguese utilised the native chiefs in the same way.

**Indirect rule** Because of Lugard's successful use of indirect rule in northern Nigeria, the system was extended to much of British Africa, including the mandatory areas of Tanganyika and the Cameroons. The Belgians also adopted it in the Congo, despite the fact that conditions for its success were not nearly so favourable as those amongst the Fulbe command system in northern Nigeria. Where there was no convenient Fulbe system of rule, indirect rule did not work so well. The Ibo of eastern Nigeria, for example, lacked a central power structure, without paramount or other chiefs. After 1926 Dr C. K. Meek, a state anthropologist, did much to determine the social and political structure of society, and this resulted in a much smoother functioning of the system, although the Ibo did not accept the so-called 'warrant chiefs' or headmen appointed by the British. According to Michael Crowder the 'warrant chiefs' were frequently people who sought favour with the British and they were seldom figures of authority in the community.<sup>24</sup> Among the Yoruba of western Nigeria, traditional authority was built around the person of a strong paramount chief, but lesser chiefs and headmen had no place in this structure. Under indirect rule minor chiefs were given so much power that the position of the true paramount chief was undermined and the minor chiefs became the real 'native authorities'. After its introduction the system showed no signs of further development and stagnated until the governor, Sir Donald Cameron (who, like so many other West African governors, had received his training under Lugard), began adapting the system during the early thirties. He curtailed the power of the emirs in the north and began to look for ways of developing traditional forms of government. He ap-

pointed Africans with a Western education to the Southern Nigerian Chiefs' Council – a step that had positive results.

<b>Position of the chief</b>	Throughout sub-Saharan Africa the position of the chiefs changed from a 'native authority' to a government agent, even where indirect rule was applied. This was a result of new demands such as tax collection, the taking of censuses and recruitment for labour and military purposes. Chiefs were manipulated to satisfy colonial needs, abolished where they were considered superfluous or, as in the Belgian case, created where they could serve a useful end. In a drastic reorganisation of local administration started in 1918, the number of chieftaincies was drastically reduced and a new administrative unit, the section, was introduced. In French West Africa some villages were grouped into a canton controlled by an indigenous administrative agent. A royal decree of 1919 placed the nomadic Libyan population into tribes and sub-tribes on the advice of the regional commissioner.
<b>Position of the local administrator</b>	The local administrator invariably developed into a surrogate chief. According to Robert Delavignette these officials were not administrators but commanders acting as chiefs. <sup>25</sup> In the French empire, where there was a perennial shortage of personnel, he served as president of the judiciary, superintendent of prisons, director of customs, meteorological observer and special agent. This eroded the unobtrusive role he was supposed to play, especially under the philosophy of indirect rule. The Italian administrators in Somalia came closest to the British in their use of this principle despite the modifications local circumstances and personal tastes introduced. Lugard's views were hard to put into practice, even by his pupil Sir Donald Cameron when he was involved in its application in Tanganyika.
<b>Cameron's reforms</b>	Cameron introduced Lugard's ideas there in 1926, but preferred to call the system 'Local Native Administration'. The essence of the system was exercised by the government through indigenous institutions, with administrative officers working through the traditional rulers and not communicating directly with the people. Cameron introduced a tripartite power structure. Firstly there were the traditional headmen with power to maintain order and collect taxes. Secondly, indigenous courts were reintroduced to act in accordance with the traditional judicial system. Cameron deviated from the Lugard formula and replaced the right of appeal to a higher British court. The tribal treasury became the third pillar in his administration. Cameron also attempted to create regional councils consisting of African headmen. He wanted these bodies to be the highest authority but the unwillingness of some of the headmen to abide by the decisions of the council created an obstacle in the path of his ideal.
<b>Failure of indirect rule</b>	In Tanganyika, as elsewhere in black Africa, westernised blacks rejected the system, and by 1940 it was clear that indirect rule had failed to live up to expectations, especially where detribalisation and westernisation assumed significant proportions. Besides, the way in which indirect rule functioned was dependent on individual preferences of officials and local circumstances as well as on the reaction of traditional chiefs. Too much emphasis on the power of chiefs and paramount chiefs and the lack of opportunity for progress began to outweigh the advantages of a cheap system of government

over vast regions and the preservation of tribal integrity. Adaptations were necessary – a process hastened by the coming of the Second World War.

## ECONOMIC TRENDS

**Effects of world depression** A short economic boom set in after the First World War, but this soon gave way to market instability and a lengthy world depression which created low prices and a poor demand for raw materials. African colonies depending on the sale of primary products were hard hit. The development that followed was unequal, and those colonies where mining enjoyed prominence grew at a more rapid rate than the others. Katanga and Northern Rhodesia, for example, saw a dramatic increase in production while Tanganyika, where exports were limited to some agricultural products, lagged behind. Besides mineral exports, the only crop providing a major impetus to Africa's economic development in the inter-war period was cocoa.

**Mining** The simple extraction of mineral ores alone did not contribute much to the continent's economic growth. More sophisticated mining, which supplemented the extraction of ores with smelting and refining, was more successful. This included the working of copper, coal, gold and other minerals that required special skills, as well as plants, water and electricity supply, workshops and stores. These attracted services such as telecommunication and communications. Roads, railways and harbours brought foreign capital and set off a series of activities which also involved domestic capital. This put the colonies concerned on the way towards modernisation, since the services needed to support these mining activities sparked additional needs. Towns to house the workers created a demand for building materials, fuel, food, clothing and services such as health, banks, merchants and insurance facilities. Town dwellers and farmers benefited from these developments, but the spread was very uneven – southern Africa, the Belgian Congo, and British West Africa benefited most while French and Portuguese Africa lagged behind.

**Provision of infrastructure** In terms of the provision of infrastructure, the years before the outbreak of the Second World War were of specific significance. Railroads were built, stretching over a distance of 51 200 km, and cities such as Ndola, Dar es Salaam and Elisabethville appeared. More than 640 000 km of roads linked these cities, towns and villages, and the arrival of motorised transport not only made communication easier, but also diminished distances and brought an end to portage as a form of transport and labour.

**Influx of commodities** Although the value of Africa's foreign trade dropped by 42 per cent between 1929 and 1932 and did not reach the 1929 level before 1938, the continent experienced a considerable influx of new commodities in this period. Some of these reached the remote villages in the form of consumer goods such as food and drink, and means of transport in the form of bicycles, wagons and capital investment goods such as ploughs, water pumps, sewing machines, cattle dips and fences. This created opportunities for new occupations such as mechanic, bicycle repairer, truck driver, photographer and railway ganger. Migrant workers still did the work on the mines and plantations but forced labour disappeared from the scene. The British, French and Belgians adopted the

International Forced Labour Convention in 1930 – only the Portuguese stayed out. The colonial rulers did make some exceptions to the convention which enabled compulsory military service, convict labour, and work dealing with civil obligations, emergencies and communal tasks. The French retained forced labour for public works ('prestation') until 1946 while labour performed on government projects could serve as a substitute for military service.

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| <b>Responsibilities of European governments</b> | During the inter-war years, governments were not expected to transform traditional societies economically. Their responsibility was limited to assistance in the creation of the necessary infrastructure. The production of goods was left in the hands of individual entrepreneurs. The ideal of financial self-sufficiency for each territory was still strong, and each region was expected to ensure that its budget was balanced. The wealthy colonies succeeded while the poorer ones sometimes failed to provide even essential services. Officials were not equipped to promote development, and administration enjoyed much higher priority in imperial government than economic development. The colonial officials saw themselves as guardians instead of innovators of economic growth. Besides, colonial administrators firmly believed that there was 'infinite time ahead'. |
| <b>Stimulation of economic growth</b>           | This attitude changed in the late 1930s when world prices began to rise and the demand for raw materials increased Africa's exports and trade. Governments became more involved in the stimulation and direction of economic growth. The initial use of the state's power to mobilise labour, to force Africans to grow certain crops and to relinquish land was augmented with the protection of the Africans' interests, better industrial and mining conditions, the protection of migrant labour and the regulation of trade. The colonial state also laid the foundation for research in medicine, veterinary science, plant biology, parasitology, geology and zoology – developments that were the outcome of imperial and public capital sources which had been invested in Africa between 1870 and 1936.   |

## RESURGENT EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM

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| <b>Division of Ethiopia</b> | Italy's abortive attempt to occupy Ethiopia in 1896 did not end its ambitions to become a colonial power. A tripartite agreement between Italy, Britain and France in 1906 guaranteed Ethiopia's territorial integrity, but all three European countries feared that Ethiopia would lapse into anarchy when Menelik died. Consequently they divided the country into clearly defined potential spheres of influence. Italy was granted a sphere between its colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland which would enable it to link these regions and, after Menelik's death in 1913, London and Rome defined their interests in the region more carefully. <sup>26</sup> During the First World War, Italy was promised additional, more adequate compensation in the Treaty of London (1915) but at the peace negotiations at Versailles this failed to materialise. |
| <b>Concessions</b>          | The Italians claimed that the Treaty of London entitled them to compensation if the former German colonies fell to Britain and France. <sup>27</sup> They cast envious eyes at boundary adjustments with Tunisia and Egypt and wanted Kassala in the Sudan as well as land  |

they had had to relinquish to Britain in 1897. The possibility of linking Eritrea and Somaliland also remained alive. Britain was unwilling to yield to these exorbitant claims, and this compelled Vittorio Orlando, the Italian prime minister, to act cautiously, preferring compensation closer to home. Realising that the reconquest of Libya would be an expensive undertaking while opinion between the Italian delegates at the peace talks differed, Orlando dropped all claims in Africa. When the Fascists came to power, they regarded Italy as a country without colonies, and renewed bargaining resulted in Britain relinquishing Jubaland, between Somaliland and Kenya, to Italy. Mussolini was anything but grateful for these small concessions and declared that he was not a collector of deserts.

**Ethiopia** The war in Libya prevented Italy from action in Northeast Africa until the 1930s while Mussolini's attempts at extending his influence to western Ethiopia encountered stern opposition. After much bargaining Britain recognised exclusive Ethiopian economic rights in this region in return for British rights in the vicinity of the Tana River where Britain's cotton lobby pressed for the building of a dam. This would enable the country to grow cotton in the Sudan instead of Egypt, which was slipping from Britain's grip after 1922.<sup>28</sup> These arrangements made it possible for the Italians to link Eritrea and Somaliland by rail but the Ethiopian regent, Ras Tafari (Haile Selassie), who obtained membership of the League of Nations with Italian support in 1923, protested vehemently against these arrangements, which were made without France's knowledge. It is doubtful whether Ras Tafari would have succeeded in preventing the division if France had not felt that this arrangement threatened French trade with Ethiopia, which formed a vital link in its communications with the Far East and Madagascar. Consequently France declared itself willing to develop Ethiopia economically if that country continued with a modernisation program. If this failed, the 1906 possibility of partitioning could become a reality.

**Ras Tafari** The Italians were uncertain how to deal with Ethiopia, and there was a feeling that cooperation might bring more advantages than opposition – a stable Ethiopia might mean better economic opportunities for Italians. A non-aggression pact was signed in 1928 and the Italians became Ras Tafari's advisors. Ras Tafari, who became emperor Haile Selassie in 1930, was confronted with demands for modernisation and the suppression of uprisings and increasingly feared that Italian economic pressure was the precursor to an economic protectorate. He therefore sought friends and advisors elsewhere and used Americans, Swedes, Swiss and Belgians. Other influential Ethiopians, however, favoured closer ties with Italy and supported Selassie's opponents in Eritrea and in the colonial ministry in Rome.

**Mussolini's position** This presented a serious threat to the agreement. Ethiopia was not regarded as a particularly attractive proposition, and Mussolini doubted the advantages of outright annexation, fearing that France was trying to entice him into an expensive African adventure. The non-aggression pact was renewed in 1934 despite occupation of certain parts of Ethiopia by Italian troops in 1929, and nothing came of Haile Selassie's attempts to have the borders clearly defined. Tension between the two leaders increased despite Mussolini's unwillingness to become involved in Ethiopia for the sake of possible

prestige. In fact, in 1933 the Fascist internal and external balance sheet was rather poor in the sort of active steps upon which this ideology was supposed to thrive. Attempts to bring Italy, Germany, France and Britain into a four-power pact failed, while the economic depression demonstrated the uselessness of Fascist economic plans. But Hitler's accession to power created tensions in Europe. This offered Mussolini greater movement elsewhere, since he calculated that Hitler's war plans would be ready only by 1937.<sup>29</sup> Besides, the conquest of Libya had been completed and only Ethiopia remained for Fascism to demonstrate its worth. A war plan was drawn up and in 1934 Italy increased its armaments while Ethiopia reorganised its army.

**French pact with Italy**

A minor frontier incident at the Wal Wal oasis in December 1934 gave Mussolini a pretext to 'restore order', abolish the slave trade and extend 'civilisation'. In January 1935 Haile Selassie appealed to the League of Nations, where action depended upon the attitude on the two strongest nations, Britain and France. Unfortunately for Ethiopia they were more concerned about the growing Nazi threat in Europe than the fate of Ethiopia. Both tried to apply sanctions, but were torn between preserving a common front against Hitler's growing power and their African interests. French fear of Hitler induced it to sign a pact with Italy in 1935 which apparently gave Mussolini a free hand in Ethiopia while there was also support for the Italians in the British cabinet. This based Haile Selassie's faith in the League of Nations on false hopes.

**Italian attack on Ethiopia**

Meanwhile the League Council tried to effect a compromise, but Mussolini rejected it. The Hoare-Laval proposals for a subdivision of Ethiopia followed, but also proved abortive. By this time the Ethiopian campaign was already far advanced and Addis Ababa fell in May 1936. Ethiopia became part of the new Italian East African empire. Haile Selassie went into exile in Britain where he remained until 1940. Despite the fact that they were poorly armed, the Ethiopians chose to meet the Italians on the open battlefield but were powerless against superior Italian weapons and attacks from the air. Italian use of poison gas and aerial bombing were labelled barbaric and evoked bitter reaction from black nationalists elsewhere in the world. For black intellectuals in Africa, as well as Afro-Americans, Ethiopia was the personification of their own pride and worth, therefore they regarded the Italian attack on Ethiopia as an attack upon all of them. Various organisations held joint protests. This was indicative of a new spirit of cooperation among those who wanted to arouse Africa and evidence of a sense of national consciousness that rose on the eve of the Second World War and which created a new climate in which African nationalism could thrive. We must now turn to the development of this sentiment between the two world wars.

## Notes

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- 5 W. M. Schmokel, *Dream of empire: German colonialism, 1919–1945*, pp. 80–81.
- 6 Moon, *Imperialism and world politics*, p. 480.
- 7 C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, 'French black Africa', in A. D. Roberts (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 7, *From 1905 to 1940*, p. 362.
- 8 P. Giniewsky, *Die stryd om Suidwes-Afrika*, p. 34.
- 9 J. P. van S. Bruwer, *South West Africa: Disputed land*, p. 111.
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- 11 R. F. Betts, *Uncertain dimensions: Western overseas empires in the twentieth century*, pp. 48 and 53.
- 12 R. Anstey, *King Leopold's legacy: The Congo under Belgian rule, 1908–1960*, p. 37.
- 13 H. Grimal, *Decolonization: The British, French, Dutch and Belgian empires, 1919–1963*, p. 9.
- 14 A. J. Wills, *An introduction to the history of Central Africa*, p. 244.
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- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
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- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 65; D. M. Smith, *Italy*, p. 450; and A. J. P. Taylor, *English history, 1914–1945*, p. 468.