

# HISTORY

shapes the present

1800

1840

1880

1920

1960

Today

## Legacies of Colonialism

**A** century or more of European colonial rule has left modern African nations with many problems that work against their political stability. What are the legacies of colonialism in Africa?

### European Nations Divide Africa

In 1884, delegates from twelve European countries, the Ottoman Empire, and the United States met in Berlin, Germany. All of them already had interests or claimed colonies in Africa. They wanted to set ground rules for taking over the continent without clashes among themselves. No representatives from Africa were invited, however.

The Berlin Conference was called because of a sudden expansion in European **imperialism**, or empire building, in the 1870s. National pride was strong in Europe, and ambitious nations wanted empires. Colonies and trading rights were also important because of the rapid growth of industries. Africa offered both rich resources and new markets for European goods.



Ivory carving, Nigeria, c. 1500s

### The European Takeover

European nations carved up Africa to suit themselves. The slave trade in preceding centuries had weakened societies and economies in many parts of Africa. Still, some African rulers resisted strongly. The Ashanti kingdom battled British rule in a series of wars between

1824 and 1900.

Mandinka warriors led by Samori Toure battled the French along the Niger River. Nonetheless, by 1914 (map, next page), only Liberia and Ethiopia remained free of European rule.



Wood carving, Congo, early 1900s

### Types of Colonial Rule

**Direct rule** In most African colonies, European officials set up governments and laws like those in their home countries. They replaced local rulers with officials sent out from Belgium or Germany or Portugal. Africans were kept out of government and had few chances for education or professional training.

French colonial officials also took direct control, but they tried to make the local Africans into French citizens. They brought in French schools and political ways to replace African institutions.

**Indirect rule** In British colonies, African officials and local leaders were allowed to run

local governments and community affairs. Final authority, however, rested with the local British residents.

## The Past Challenges New Nations

In the 1950s and 1960s, most African colonies gained independence. But the years of colonial rule left many problems for the new nations. New national boundaries usually followed colonial borders, which had been drawn by Europeans who knew little about Africa. They often put together within one nation people from rival ethnic groups with different languages, religious beliefs, and traditions. These differences led to bloody violence and political unrest in a number of nations, such as Nigeria and present-day Rwanda.

Few Europeans were interested in Africa's long-term development. As a result, Africans gained no training as government workers or administrators. Education was not encouraged.

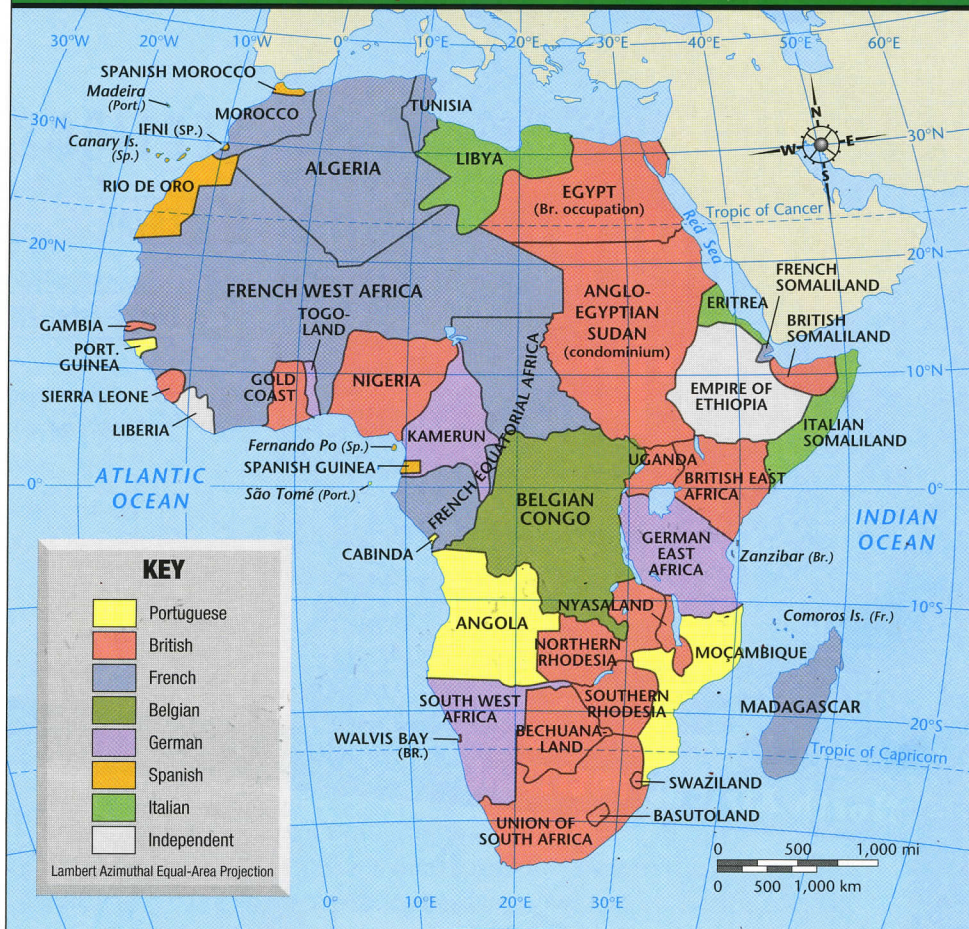
## connecting

TO TODAY



1. According to the map, what two European countries held the greatest amount of African territory in 1914?
2. What different styles did European nations adopt in ruling their colonies?
3. **Critical Thinking** What disadvantages did colonial rule have for Africans in colonies? What advantages might it have brought?

## Colonial Powers in Africa: 1914



The economy, moreover, was run only to profit the colonizing country. Colonial industries stripped away valuable minerals and timber, while ignoring economic development in Africa itself.

Today African governments work to reverse these patterns. In many African nations, the struggle for true economic independence continues.

4. **Hands-On Activity** Trace the outlines of the map of Africa in 1914 and compare it with a map of Africa today. Label each present-day country with both its colonial name and its current name. (Redraw any national boundaries as necessary.) Color-code your map to show the colonial background of the modern nations.