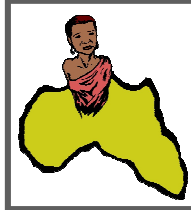


# Imperialism in Africa

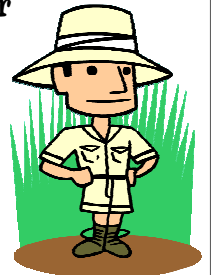
## Africa

- **Imperialism** can be defined as a stronger country dominating a weaker one economically, politically & socially.
- Up until the mid-1800s, the continent of Africa was called "The Dark Continent" because the interior was largely unexplored & unknown by Europeans.
- Outposts and trading ports had been established by Europeans, but mainly along the Eastern & Western coasts. As late as 1880, Europeans controlled only 10% of African land.



## European Motives

- Europeans had both political and economic motives for imperialism in Africa.
- Economically, Europeans were driven to colonize Africa because of the rich natural resources found there. Raw materials were essential for industrialization, and *cheap* raw materials provided a bigger economic profit.
- Politically, each European nation desired power and influence. By the 19th century, this was measured by the number of colonies possessed.
- The new and powerful force of nationalism drove each nation to gain as many colonies as possible. This created competitions among the European nations that were not very friendly.
- Finally, a new theory was circulating in Europe – **Social Darwinism**. It suggested that certain civilizations were superior to others, and as *survival of the fittest* implied, superior should dominate inferior.



## Berlin Conference 1884-85

- Europeans were so aggressive in pursuing colonies that they nearly came to blows on several occasions. It was decided that in order to avoid war, nations should sit down and acknowledge each other's claims in Africa.
- The nations met in Berlin in 1884 to divide up Africa in a "civil" manner. Not surprisingly, African nations were not invited to attend or contribute.
- Colonial divisions were drawn along convenient *geographic* lines (along the line of a river, for example).
- This created a lasting problem for Africa because tribal boundaries were completely disregarded. Warlike tribes were included together in nations, while friendly tribes were divided. (Much of this was done purposely by the Europeans.) This has contributed to unity problems and ethnic warfare in modern times.



## Long Range Impact

- Europeans brought some positive changes to Africa. Most of the changes involved more sophisticated technology, transportation and communication systems, and better education and medical care.
- All of this came with a terrible price tag, however. Natives lost their independence and frequently lost their traditional culture, religion and language. Almost always, natives were treated like second class citizens in their own nation.

