

# **The African Experience: From “Lucy” to Mandela**

**Part I**

**Professor Kenneth P. Vickery**



**THE TEACHING COMPANY ®**

## **Kenneth P. Vickery, Ph.D.**

Alumni Distinguished Undergraduate Professor,  
North Carolina State University

Ken Vickery was born in Washington, D.C., and raised in Virginia and Mississippi. He received his B.A. degree with Phi Beta Kappa honors at Duke University in 1970. He went on to study sub-Saharan African history at Yale University under the late South African historian Leonard Thompson. His dissertation, a study of the political economy of southern Zambia in the colonial period, involved both archival and extensive oral-historical fieldwork. Yale awarded him the Ph.D. degree in 1978.

Professor Vickery joined the history faculty at North Carolina State University in 1977, where he continues to teach and serves as the department's Director of Undergraduate Advising. He has been a visiting professor on several occasions at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and at Meredith College. In 1993, he was awarded a Fulbright teaching fellowship and spent the entire year of 1994 as Fulbright Visiting Associate Professor in the Department of Economic History of the University of Zimbabwe in Harare.

Dr. Vickery was inducted into the Academy of Outstanding Teachers at NC State in 1986. In 2005, he was named Alumni Distinguished Undergraduate Professor, the university's highest teaching honor.

Professor Vickery has continued to conduct research during his 11 journeys to Africa. His book *Black and White in Southern Zambia: The Tonga Plateau Economy and British Imperialism, 1890–1939* (1986) was a finalist for the Herskovits Prize, given annually by the African Studies Association for the outstanding book in African studies in any discipline. He has published numerous articles and reviews in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *American Historical Review*, and other journals. In 2006, in honor of the anthropologist Elizabeth Colson, he edited and prepared a collection of 15 essays, *The Tonga-Speaking Peoples of Zambia and Zimbabwe*. Professor Vickery is also preparing a biography of Sir Roy Welensky, Prime Minister of the Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland (1956–1963), set in the context of Southern African labor history.

## Table of Contents

### The African Experience: From “Lucy” to Mandela

### Part I

<b>Professor Biography</b> .....	i
<b>Course Scope</b> .....	1
<b>Lecture One</b> .....	Finding the “Lost Continent”.....
<b>Lecture Two</b> .....	Africa’s Many Natural Environments.....
<b>Lecture Three</b> .....	A Virtual Tour of the Great Land .....
<b>Lecture Four</b> .....	The Cradle of Humankind .....
<b>Lecture Five</b> .....	Crops, Cattle, Iron—Taming a Continent.....
<b>Lecture Six</b> .....	Kinship and Community—Societies Take Shape....
<b>Lecture Seven</b> .....	Like Nothing Else—The Ancient Nile Valley.....
<b>Lecture Eight</b> .....	Soul and Spirit—Religion in Africa .....
<b>Lecture Nine</b> .....	Ethiopia—Outpost of Christianity .....
<b>Lecture Ten</b> .....	West Africa’s “Golden Age” .....
<b>Lecture Eleven</b> .....	The Swahili Commercial World .....
<b>Lecture Twelve</b> .....	Great Zimbabwe and the Cities of the South .....
<b>Timeline</b> .....	38
<b>Glossary</b> .....	42
<b>Biographical Notes</b> .....	Part II
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	Part III

## The African Experience: From “Lucy” to Mandela

### Scope:

This course of 36 lectures is intended to provide a general introduction to Africa and its history. To many in the West, Africa has often seemed to be the Lost Continent—“lost” in two senses. The first would be *lost from view*: Many of us simply don’t hear much or know much about the place and its past. The second would be “lost” in the sense of *hopelessly lost*: What we do hear seems overwhelmingly negative, dominated by poverty, disease, disasters, violence, and tyranny. Our aim is certainly not to sugarcoat, explain away, or make excuses; there is enough reality behind these images to make doing so a genuine disservice. Our objective is to provide a fuller and more balanced view, a greater appreciation and understanding of the complexity of the African experience.

This course will focus primarily on Africa south of the Sahara Desert. This reflects the training, research interests, and teaching concentration of the instructor. Indeed, for related reasons, if there is a privileged subcontinent in the course’s coverage, it would be Southern Africa. The Republic of South Africa, in particular, features prominently, in part because it is by far the most developed and powerful country within our scope, but also because its history at many junctures yields fascinating comparisons with the history of North America. Nonetheless, we will devote plenty of attention to themes and developments centered in West, Central, and East Africa. Although the sequence of lectures is essentially chronological and based on dynamics unfolding in the whole continent or in a major subregion, at several points, we will devote a lecture to a specific country, such as Ethiopia, the Congo, or Zimbabwe, in addition to South Africa.

History is often described as drama; if true, it is played out on a stage. Our original stage comprises the many natural environments of the African continent. Following an introductory lecture, we begin our course with descriptions of the basic ecological zones of Africa, then sample some of the more spectacular specific places, such as Mt. Kilimanjaro and the Victoria Falls (one of the seven natural wonders of the world). We continue by considering African history in the truly long run. This, after all, is the so-called “cradle of mankind,” and we examine not only the evidence concerning human origins but the transformation of human society from hunting and gathering to agriculture and the Iron Age. We analyze the emergence of essential social categories related to kinship, ethnic identity (what is a “tribe”? ), and politics—the groundwork for African states and kingdoms.

We pause in Lecture Seven to mark an exception to our sub-Saharan focus by looking briefly at ancient Egypt and its connections to Africa further south, upstream on the Nile.

Lecture Eight surveys the enduring importance of religion—indigenous, as well as Islam and Christianity—and the following lecture provides an overview of the ancient outpost of Christianity, the Ethiopian kingdom. We then encounter some recurring themes of the course—statebuilding and the connection with long-distance trade—by exploring the “golden age” in the West African savanna, the rise of the Swahili city-states on the east coast, and the massive ruins of Great Zimbabwe in the south.

Some 500 years ago, global history reached a turning point, symbolized rather well by Columbus’s voyage. In Africa as elsewhere, from this point forward, relations with Western powers become increasingly relevant. Over a span of six lectures, we illustrate this by investigating two absolutely critical developments: West Africa’s long, deep, and tragic involvement in the Atlantic slave trade and the origins of modern South Africa, beginning with the Cape Colony in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and culminating in the discoveries of diamonds and gold in the late 19<sup>th</sup>.

By that point, Africa’s encounter with Europe reaches another crucial juncture. Important as the slave trade and proto-South Africa were, most of Africa retained its independence and was not colonized until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Then, in a very short space of time, it was—in fact, virtually the entire continent was carved up and added to one or another European empire. We look at the reasons for this sudden imposition, African resistance, and the commonalities and differences in various colonial systems.

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, however, under intense pressure from African nationalists, the colonial edifice began to crumble nearly as fast as it had been built. But the paths to independence varied dramatically from colony to colony, especially between those that achieved decolonization peacefully and those where bloody liberation wars emerged. Nonetheless, with the final triumph of Nelson Mandela and his movement in South Africa, by the 1990s, colonialism and/or white minority rule were things of the past.

The drive to independence engendered great hopes and great expectations. After an initial period with genuine achievements, things began to turn sour—a bitter disappointment for so many. We analyze the factors—both internal and external—contributing to this downturn. We consider particularly appalling situations, to wit, the Rwanda genocide and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Yet we observe as well not only the South African “miracle” but also a revival of democratic spirit in many corners of Africa. We conclude with an assessment of Africa at the start of the millennium, mixing sobering reality with some reasons for hope, however cautious.

## Lecture One

### Finding the “Lost Continent”

**Scope:** To many in the Western world, Africa seems to be the “Lost Continent.” This is true in two senses: lost from view, as a forgotten corner of the global village, or hopelessly lost, with a past and present riddled with disasters both human and natural. This lecture will lay out a roadmap for “finding” Africa by examining the long run of its history. We will begin with the physical geography and evolution of humanity here in the “cradle of mankind.” We then survey the major phases in the unfolding of the human experience in various parts of this huge continent. The lecture will introduce the basic themes of the course, including the transformation of the environment; the nature of ethnic or “tribal” identity; the rise and fall of states, kingdoms, and empires; and the constantly changing interface with the outside world.

### Outline

- I.** To many of us, Africa seems to be the “Lost Continent.”
  - A.** Is Africa really “lost”? I don’t happen to believe so, but I can readily understand why it seems that way to many of us in the Western world for two main reasons.
    1. The first reason is that Africa seems *lost from view*. We don’t hear very much or know very much about the place; it is marginal in our consciousness.
    2. The second reason is that much of what we do hear often reinforces an image of Africa as *hopelessly lost*, a place whose past and present are mired in poverty, disease, violence, disaster, corruption, and tyranny.
    3. This imagery itself has a long history in the West, as intellectuals and ordinary folk alike have dismissed Africa as the very repository of “savagery.” Passages from Hume, Hegel, and 20<sup>th</sup>-century historian Hugh Trevor-Roper illustrate this notion.
  - B.** In this course, obviously, we focus our view on Africa and “find” it in that sense.
    1. As for the negative imagery, let us be clear that our object is most definitely not to sugarcoat, explain away, or make excuses; there is enough reality behind the images of misery to make doing so a genuine disservice.
    2. We do, however, want to provide a much fuller and more balanced perspective on the continent and its history over the long run. We are seeking a subtler understanding and appreciation of the varieties of the “African experience.”
- II.** Reflecting the training, research interests, and teaching concentration of your instructor, the course will concentrate on Africa south of the great Sahara Desert. West, Central, and East Africa will all receive plenty of attention, and Southern Africa will especially concern us, partly because its history bears some fascinating comparisons with that of North America.
- III.** Here is our roadmap for finding Africa and its history over the course of these 36 lectures.
  - A.** History is often described as a drama; if true, it is played out on a stage. Our stage is the quite varied natural environment, which we will sample by means of a “virtual tour.”
  - B.** Of course, we are primarily interested in human history. Africa has the longest human history of all, and we will examine the evolution of humankind in the “cradle of humanity” and offer the evidence for calling it “the cradle.”
  - C.** In the rest of the course, we investigate the principal phases in the unfolding of the human experience in this vast continent. We will follow a basic chronological pattern with some occasional diversions. Certain recurrent themes, listed below, will attract our gaze.
    1. How have Africans—and outsiders—altered the environment? The introduction of iron tools, the development of agriculture, the growth in population, and the emergence of cities and infrastructure have profoundly altered the relationship between people and nature.
    2. How have Africans structured and organized their communities? What is the nature of African identity? What is a “tribe,” anyway? What is the status of women in African society, past and present?

3. What is Africa's religious and spiritual history? What has been the influence of Christianity and Islam?
4. What were the great states, kingdoms, and empires that, in Africa as elsewhere, have dominated so much of human history? How do we explain their rise—and fall?
5. Africa has not been nearly so isolated as many imagine. What were the critical aspects of Africa's relationships with the wider world, ranging from the impact of Christianity and Islam, the dynamics of the Atlantic slave trade, and the takeover of the continent by colonial powers to the challenges of independence, the ravages of HIV/AIDS, and Africa's place in the digital age?

**Suggested Reading:**

Howard French, *A Continent for the Taking: The Tragedy and Hope of Africa*, pp. xiii–xvii, 3–24.

Erik Gilbert and Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*, pp. xi–xiv.

John Reader, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*, pp. ix–xii, 3–6.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What conceptions of Africa do you bring to the course? Be honest—there's no right or wrong answer.
2. Have you ever considered that the histories of the United States and parts, at least, of Africa—particularly Southern Africa—might be comparable? If so, how?

## Lecture Two

### Africa's Many Natural Environments

**Scope:** In this lecture, we begin our survey of the incredibly varied African land mass. We quickly move past old stereotypes of Africa being all “jungle.” The sheer size of Africa emerges through comparison with other countries and continents. We note the key elements that affect environment—latitude, temperature, rainfall, elevation, topography—and the ways these combine to create savanna, desert, and tropical rain forest. We characterize these zones in terms of flora, fauna, and above all, the potential to support human societies—or harm them, through disease. The variety multiplies as we add more particular landscapes dominated by mountains, rivers, lakes, or seacoast. Of course, environments change, and we look at the possible impact of deforestation, global warming, and desertification.

### Outline

- I. Like so much else about Africa, the landscape itself has often been stereotyped.
  - A. To an older generation (such as the instructor's!) raised on Tarzan, Africa was one word: jungle.
  - B. To younger folk, raised on animal programs, Africa was endless grassland, home to rather more beasts than people.
  - C. And to many, inured to tragic stories (real enough, heaven knows) of famine and hunger, Africa may simply seem barren, godforsaken.
- II. Let's develop a more realistic appreciation of what is, in fact, an incredibly varied set of environments. Africa has room for variety; the place to begin is with the continent's sheer size.
  - A. The second largest continent, Africa is more than three times the size of the continental United States.
  - B. To put it differently, Africa is bigger than Europe, China, India, Argentina, New Zealand, and the continental United States combined.
  - C. In many parts of Africa, this sense of vastness and enormity is palpable to the visitor. It can have the look and feel of “big sky country,” like the North American West. In short, immensity and variety are the keywords in speaking of Africa.
- III. Many factors—latitude, temperature, rainfall, elevation, soil type, topography, vegetation—contribute to the making of an environment.
  - A. Most, but certainly not all, of Africa lies between the Tropic of Cancer in the north and the Tropic of Capricorn in the south. South Africa, for example, can be quite cold in the winter months.
    - 1. Even places that lie on the equator can have permanent ice and snow if they are high enough.
    - 2. From the ocean, the land mass tends to rise very quickly, then flattens out quickly into Africa's plains. An effect of this is that the rivers do not serve as avenues for transportation or communication because they fall over great rapids on the way to the sea.
  - B. Generally speaking, Africa's climate is warm year-round.
    - 1. That year-round warmth and the great age of the African land mass have led to decomposition of organic matter; thus, Africa's soil is generally poor, with only about eight percent being cultivable and only about three percent that can be considered fertile.
    - 2. Year-round warmth also means that the climate is hospitable to microbes and the diseases they cause, such as malaria, yellow fever, and sleeping sickness.
  - C. Africa is a relatively dry continent, often with seasonal rainfall.
  - D. Combining these various elements, we can identify three “major” African environments.
    - 1. The first is, indeed, “jungle”—or, more properly, tropical rain forest. It is present in Africa, though in far less quantity than many imagine: certainly less than 10 percent of the total area.
    - 2. The second is desert. The Sahara is the world's largest, though the Kgalagadi (Kalahari) and Namib in the southwest corner and the desert regions in the “Horn” (Somalia/Ethiopia/northern Kenya) mean that this type of environment covers a huge portion of the African landmass.

3. The third is savanna. High in elevation, gently rolling to flattish, alternately wooded and grassed, with seasonal rainfall, this environment is, for our purposes, the most important, as it has probably been home to more people, and people's history, than any other.

IV. In addition to these three major ecological zones are other environments particularly affected by elevation or proximity to water. In East Africa, the first two listed below are products of the *Great Rift*—the major tectonic plate disturbance running right down the “spine” of Africa.

- A. *Montane*, or mountainous, environs encompass both volcanic peaks, such as Kilimanjaro, and major ranges, such as the Mountains of the Moon or the Drakensberg.
- B. *Lacustrine*, or lakeside, regions are clearly affected by the resources—fish, most obviously—that the lakes provide. East Africa's Great Lakes area is an example.
- C. *Riverine*, or river valley, environs likewise tend to be dominated by the watercourse. Though rivers often wind up marking boundaries, in fact, they tend to draw people together rather than divide them.
- D. To say a place is *coastal* speaks for itself. All over the world, nearness to the sea has been a major determinant of economy and culture.

V. Of course, environments are not static; they change. As we noted in Lecture One, the way that people have changed their natural environments is a major theme of this course. At this point, we observe that desertification, deforestation, and global warming are all manifested, with quite real consequences for people in Africa today.

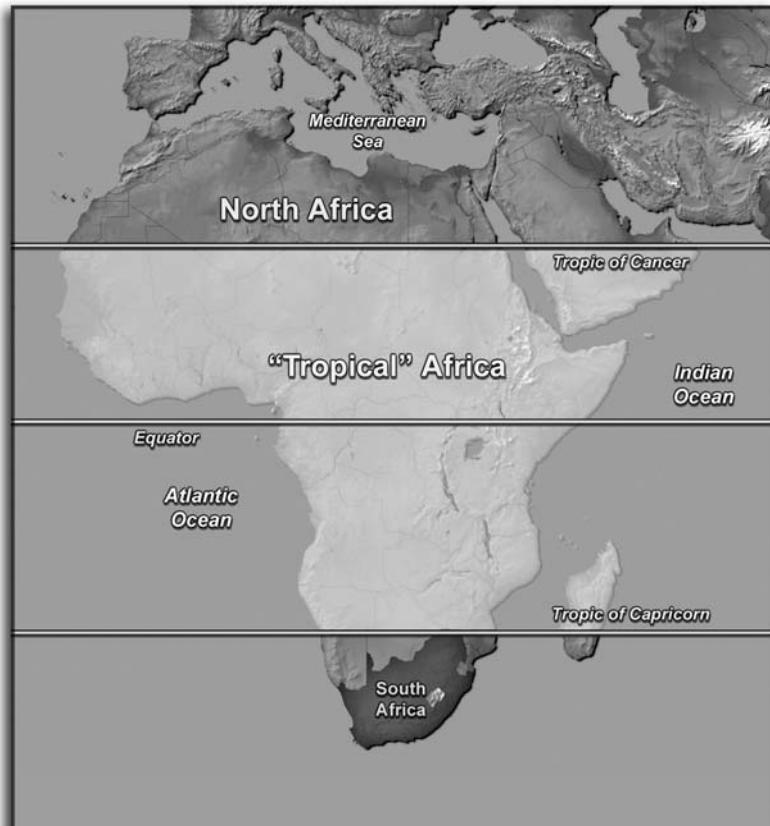
**Suggested Reading:**

Erik Gilbert and Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*, pp. 16–23.

John Reader, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*, pp. 9–41.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Are there environmental factors that might explain why Africa, the place where humankind originated, has historically had relatively low population densities?
2. Most savanna regions have quite distinct wet and dry seasons; how would this factor affect such activities as farming, transportation, and even warfare, in, say, a guerilla-style war?



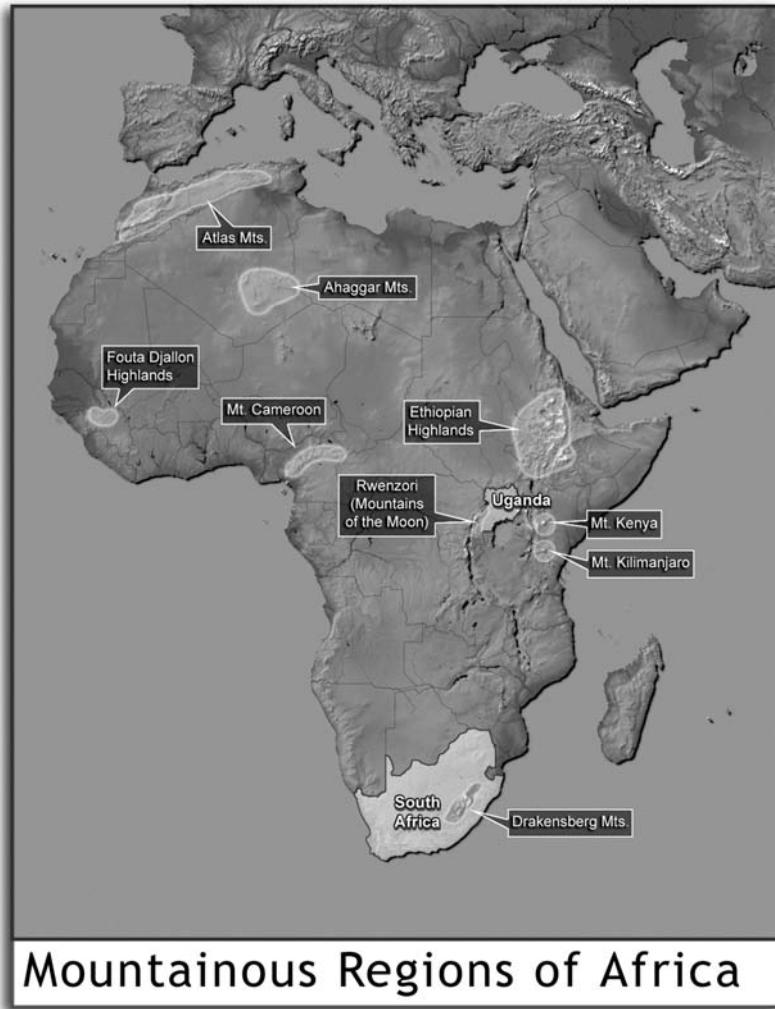
## Tropical Africa

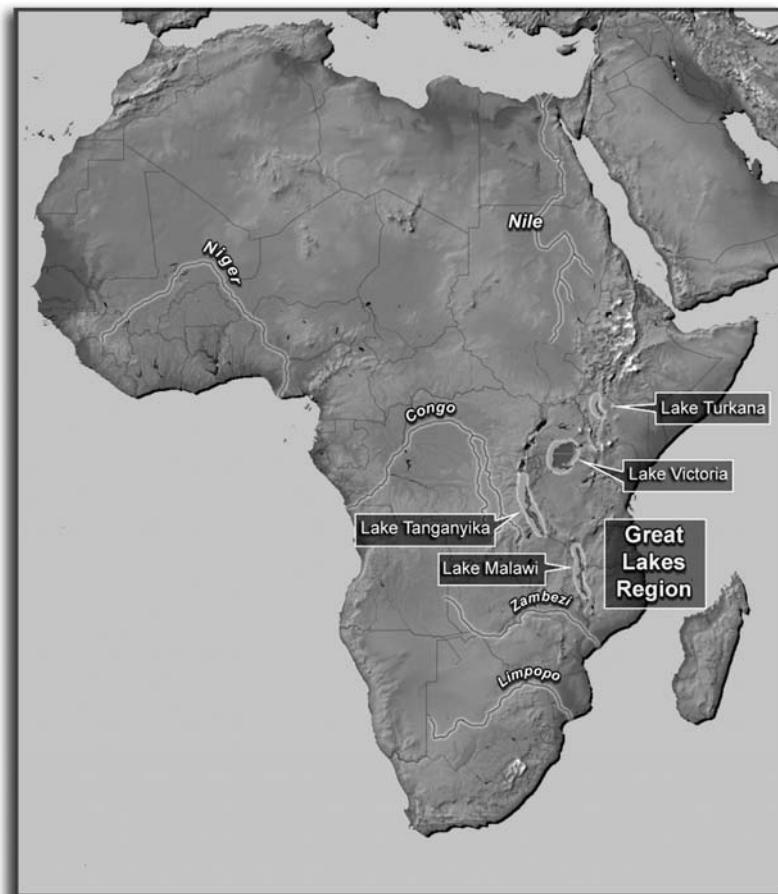
Much of Africa, particularly the sub-Saharan regions discussed in this course, is indeed tropical, lying between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. South Africa, however, is mostly in the temperate zone. High elevation can also produce cold temperatures in many areas of the continent. The rule, however, is year-round warmth, which impacts soil quality, the proliferation of diseases, and other climate-related challenges.



## Africa's Principal Environments

The dominant environment in sub-Saharan Africa is savanna: the great high plateaus. A great savanna belt, the Sudan, stretches west to east across Africa, and savanna also makes up much of southern and central Africa. The great deserts are the Sahara as well as the semidesert Sahel on the Sahara's southern fringe. The Namib and the Kalahari are the great deserts of southern Africa, and desert regions also exist along the Horn of Africa. Finally, rain forests are prominent in the Congo basin as well as along the western coast of Africa.





## Major Lakes and Rivers of Africa

## Lecture Three

### A Virtual Tour of the Great Land

**Scope:** With the basic types of African environments established, we get more specific in this lecture. We embark on an imaginary tour of some of the great natural places and spaces on the continent, beginning at the southern tip, the Cape of Good Hope. We suggest an analogy between the Southern African subcontinent and the North American West—and, indeed, between the modern country of South Africa and the state of California. We visit the Cape wine country, the Wild Coast, the Fish River Canyon, and the mighty Drakensberg Mountains before leaping northward to Kilimanjaro and Mt. Kenya, the Great Lakes and Rift Valley, and on again into the Sahara's vastness and the great rain forests of West Africa and the Congo Basin. We end with one of the seven natural wonders of the world—Victoria Falls on the Zambezi.

### Outline

- I. Our object in this lecture is to add specificity to the general discussion of African environments and, frankly and simply, to *enjoy* an imaginary tour of some of the great places on the planet. (See maps at the end of Lecture Two.)
  - A. The itinerary calls for us to begin at the southwestern tip of the continent and move in a roughly counterclockwise fashion, toward the north and east first.
  - B. We then wheel west before turning south again and ending at Victoria Falls—one of the seven natural wonders of the world.
- II. If, as we suggested in the last lecture, Africa (especially Southern Africa) can evoke comparison with the North American West, it's possible as well to narrow and sharpen the analogy.
  - A. The modern country of South Africa, like the western American state of California, packs an astonishing variety of scenery into one place.
  - B. Both places provide us great mountains and great deserts; rugged, spectacular seacoasts and sandy beaches; sun-drenched wine country; and protected bays where great cities arose—Cape Town and San Francisco.
- III. Cape Town, the Cape of Good Hope, the Cape of Storms, and the “fairest Cape”—all direct us to the extreme southwestern corner of the African continent.
  - A. At the top of the Cape Peninsula—a steep, rocky, narrow, and utterly spectacular strip of land stretching for 30 or 40 miles below Cape Town and overlooking Table Bay and the city itself—is Table Mountain.
  - B. San Francisco, similar in its origins to Cape Town in that both are located on protective bays along a rugged shoreline, is known for its hills, but Table Mountain (well over 3,000 feet high) and its outliers represent another order of magnitude.
  - C. The actual Cape of Good Hope—considered to be the place where the Atlantic and Indian Oceans meet—lies at the southern end of the Cape Peninsula.
  - D. The immediate hinterland of Cape Town, the Cape Basin, is South Africa's classic wine country. It is well described as Mediterranean in its climate and pleasures.
  - E. Cross over the various mountains creating the Cape Basin, however, and you enter, rather suddenly, the *platteland* (flatland), the arid “outback” of the Cape and South African interior. Push to the north, and the climate gets drier in the deserts of the Kgalagadi and Namib.
  - F. Head east of Cape Town on the “Garden Route,” however, and encounter the *fynbos* (“fine bush”) floral kingdom, one of only six such “kingdoms” designated in the world.
- IV. Continuing east, along the Southern African coastline, we leave the Cape region and Mandela's home country of the Transkei and its Wild Coast—whose name says it all.
- V. Our last stop in South Africa is one of Africa's great mountain ranges. The Zulu peoples, whose home territory is bounded on the west by the range, called it Ukhahlamba—the “Barrier of Spears,” while the immigrant Dutch-descended Afrikaners named it the Drakensberg, or “Dragon-mountains.” Both terms describe the spiked peaks that run for hundreds of miles.

**VI.** Let us leap north now, to the heart of East Africa—truly *Out of Africa* country. Besides the warm beaches washed by the Indian Ocean and the considerable stretches of savanna, many of East Africa's notable features are related to the tectonic plate turbulence in the Earth's crust known as the *Great Rift*.

- A. On one hand, the Rift created a gigantic gash running down the “spine” of the African continent. The dry portions constitute the legendary Great Rift Valley; filled with water, it gives us the Red Sea and East Africa's Great Lakes.
- B. On the other hand, the Rift is associated with crust uplift and volcanic activity, both creating mountains—ranges, such as the Mountains of the Moon, and standalone volcanic peaks, such as Mts. Kilimanjaro and Kenya.

**VII.** If we move west now, we encounter the great equatorial rain forests, dominating much of the very center of the continent. The “darkness” in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* was in the *human* (and not necessarily African) heart, but he set it here, in this forbidding expanse of forest.

**VIII.** With another huge traverse, we go now to the great West African subcontinent.

- A. West Africa's savanna belt—home to such legendary places as the empire of Mali and Timbuktu—is also known as the Sudan (and reaches eastward to the modern country by that name).
- B. Between the Sahara and the great belt of savanna to its south lies the transitional zone known as the Sahel (from the Arabic for “shore”—in this case, the southern shore of a great ocean of sand). As the Sahara expands, by definition, the Sahel and savanna shift southward, too.
- C. Much of the whole region is taken up by the unparalleled vastness of the Sahara—the world's largest desert but also its youngest.
- D. And, finally, we come to the forest, running, with breaks, along the Atlantic coast.

**IX.** We end with truly one of the wonders of the Earth: the Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River.

- A. The Zambezi, a mile wide at this point, plunges into a narrow chasm more than 350 feet deep.
- B. The river continues downstream, of course, but leaves the chasm through an outlet barely 100 yards in width.
- C. The colossal energy released by the river's fall explains the local name, *Mosi oa Tunya*—“the smoke that thunders”—reference to the clouds of spray and deafening roar.
- D. The falls as a whole can be seen only from the air. Perhaps Livingstone said it best: “Scenes so lovely must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight.”

**Suggested Reading:**

Robert Caputo, *Kenya Journal*.

David Coulson, *Namib*.

David Coulson, *The Roof of the World*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How has the Great Rift affected Africa's terrain?
2. Physically, how is much of Africa comparable to the North American West?

## Lecture Four

### The Cradle of Humankind

**Scope:** For some time now, there has been general recognition that humankind emerged first in Africa. Two kinds of evidence point to this conclusion: fossil remains and DNA. In this lecture, we first survey, over millions of years, the evolution of the hominid line, that is, the various human-like species, now extinct, leading to *Homo sapiens sapiens*—modern humans. We highlight the dramatic African discoveries by famed paleontologists, such as Dart, the Leakeys, and Johanson, that have revolutionized the science of human origins. The second part of the lecture examines the nature of early but fully human, that is, modern human, societies. How did people live in Africa, say, 10,000 years ago? What tools did they use? How big and how mobile were their communities? Are there still people in Africa living in this style?

### Outline

- I. The overwhelming balance of evidence shows that humanity, in the broadest sense, originated in Africa. The rest of the world was populated “out of Africa.” But what makes a human? The following are the characteristics usually thought to separate us from other animals:
  - A. Bipedalism.
  - B. Enlarged brain capacity.
  - C. Language.
  - D. Regular manufacturing and reuse of tools.
- II. Two kinds of evidence demonstrate that Africa is the cradle of humankind.
  - A. The more recent form of evidence, still so new as to be absent in many textbooks, is based on the mapping of human descent by tracing inheritance of DNA. Thus far, however, this has only confirmed the painstaking, even heroic research of fossil paleontologists in eastern and southern Africa.
  - B. In the 1920s, the South African paleontologist Raymond Dart discovered remains of a creature he called *Australopithecus*.
    1. Though *Australopithecus* means “southern ape,” it was sufficiently humanlike (walking upright on two legs, for instance), and different from other extinct or modern higher primates, to be considered the start of the hominid line of evolution.
    2. Beginning in the 1930s, the tireless efforts of the Leakeys (Louis and Mary and, later, their son, Richard) in Tanzania and Kenya resulted in numerous discoveries elaborating variations of *Australopithecines* in various stages.
    3. Then, in the 1970s, Donald Johanson and his team found the famous skeleton in Ethiopia they called “Lucy,” pushing the hominid origin back to 3 to 4 million years ago.
- III. Meanwhile, other discoveries in the same region suggested that a somewhat more sophisticated species, *Homo habilis* (“man the tool maker”), overlapping or coexisting with *Australopithecus*, was almost certainly a direct ancestor of modern humans.
- IV. With the next stage, *Homo erectus*, hominids spread throughout Africa and, indeed, into much of the Old World.
- V. But evolution continued in Africa, culminating in *Homo sapiens* at least 100,000 years ago and in *Homo sapiens sapiens*—fully modern humans—perhaps 40,000 years ago. These, again, spread throughout the world from Africa.
- VI. From the time of *Homo habilis* forward, experts speak of an Early, Middle, and Late Stone Age—from the most important substance from which tools were made. The Late Stone Age roughly coincides with the appearance of *Homo sapiens sapiens*.
- VII. At this point, then, with modern people firmly established in Africa, let us try to characterize life in the (very) Late Stone Age. How were Africans living in, say, 10,000 B.C.?

- A. Let us ask first how we can know the answer to this question. We find evidence of the original inhabitants in the following ways:
  - 1. By studying archaeological remains: burial sites, tools, and bones.
  - 2. Through examining rock art and paintings.
  - 3. By observing the few remaining communities who still live in ways characteristic of the Late Stone Age.
- B. With those points in mind, let us look at the most fundamental level, when people extracted their livelihood directly from nature, gathering wild roots, fruits, and vegetables and hunting wild animals (or scavenging kills made by other animals).
- C. Communities were small, probably several dozen people at the most. They had contact, though, and limited exchange with other similar communities.
- D. Several factors—exhaustion of resources in a given area, the need for water, natural calamities, or human conflicts—imposed a high degree of mobility on these groups.
- E. The small group size meant little hierarchy and informal authority. We do see, however, the earliest forms of role specialization, with old people doing different things from the young, and men doing more hunting and women more gathering.

**VIII.** Very few communities that are dependent on hunting and gathering remain in Africa today, deep in the Kgalagadi or deep in the Congo rain forest. Contemporary studies of them, though, yield some surprising findings: If you value leisure and creativity, this culture could sustain that rather easily.

**Suggested Reading:**

John Reader, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*, chapters 5–15.

Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*.

Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, chapter 1.

Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, *The Harmless People*.

Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, pp. 1–10.

**Questions to Consider:**

- 1. What kinds of evidence support the notion of Africa as the “cradle of humankind”?
- 2. Is the hunter-gatherer lifestyle one to be pitied or one to be envied?

## Lecture Five

### Crops, Cattle, Iron—Taming a Continent

**Scope:** Beginning a few thousand years ago, life in Africa, as elsewhere, was revolutionized by the cultivation of crops and the domestication of livestock. In much of Africa, the change was reinforced by the spread of a new and incredibly useful metal: iron. Africa's Iron Age signaled a radical transformation on a number of fronts: in population and the sheer size of societies; in the capacity for settled living; in the range of specialized roles and occupations; in the exchange of goods and services and, thus, commerce; and in the potential for hierarchy and concentration of power. In many respects, the "Iron Age package" laid the groundwork for the specific histories of kingdoms and trading networks that concern us in the following lectures.

### Outline

- I. The domestication of plants and animals—agriculture and pastoralism, in other words, farming—may represent the greatest revolution in human history. All over the world, the cultivation of crops and the keeping of livestock led to radical changes in human lifestyles and social organization. Africa is certainly no exception.
  - A. Scholars continue to debate the origins of domestication.
    1. Was there a single place where it started and subsequently diffused, or were there multiple, more-or-less independent discoveries?
    2. The question is complicated by the fact that crops and animals must constantly be adapted to environments, either new environments into which they are being introduced or environments that are themselves changing.
  - B. Nonetheless, it is possible to locate the areas with the oldest evidence of domestication: northeastern Africa, including the lower Nile Valley and Ethiopia and, somewhat shockingly, areas that are today in the Sahara Desert but that only several thousand years ago were much wetter.
    1. Over a period of several thousand years, culminating in the second millennium A.D. (earlier in West and Central Africa, later in East and Southern Africa), domestication of plants and animals became the basis of livelihood, displacing hunting and gathering, in almost all of Africa.
    2. The spread was uneven. Some peoples (such as the Masai in East Africa) eschewed cultivation and were strictly pastoralists. They had sheep, goats, and mainly cattle, the benefits of which are many. Others, because of the presence of the tsetse fly or lactose intolerance, were unable to keep cattle.
    3. Crops and livestock together, though—mixed farming—was a particularly potent combination. Cattle, the supreme domestic beasts, bestow a great range of benefits to their keepers. They can serve as draft animals and provide fertilizer.
    4. The adaptations to environment meant that certain kinds of crops predominated in certain places: root crops, such as yams, in the rain forest areas; grain crops, such as sorghum and millet, in the savanna. In more recent centuries, American crops, including peanuts and maize, have become important—staples in some cases.
    5. In most areas, Africans successfully adopted agriculture despite having relatively poor soils.
- II. The impact of farming alone would have been dramatic. But the impact was redoubled by the spread of a second revolution: ironworking.
  - A. Iron smelting and smithing were almost certainly introduced from southwestern Asia (the modern Near East). Thus, most of Africa can again look to the northeastern portion of the continent as the diffusion source point.
  - B. The great value of iron rests on a paradox: It is simultaneously much tougher and more durable than previous toolmaking materials (stone, wood, bone), yet when heated, far more malleable.
- III. In North, West, and Central Africa, farming generally preceded iron, and we refer in these areas to Late Stone Age (or, in some cases, Bronze Age) agriculture. In East and Southern Africa, however, the Iron Age and the age of agriculture tended to spread nearly simultaneously.

- A. This meant that the impact was especially dramatic in East and Southern Africa; some speak of an *Iron Age package* encompassing iron, crops, and livestock.
- B. As it happened, this also largely coincided—and almost surely contributed to—the rapid spread of a family of closely related languages: Bantu languages. The *Bantu world* was, thus, mostly an Iron Age, farming world.

IV. What difference did farming and iron make? How did life compare with the old hunting/gathering world?

- A. For obvious reasons, communities became far more *sedentary*, that is, settled in one place.
- B. With less need for mobility, populations could grow, and farming, especially abetted by iron tools, could sustain far higher population densities.
- C. With a single farming homestead able to produce a surplus of food, the way was cleared for *occupational specialization*.
  1. To the smelter and the blacksmith were added the builder, the healer, and the priest.
  2. And, of course, some came to “specialize” in *power*. Surplus would be siphoned upward to support them. Potential for hierarchy and stratification multiplied.
  3. Surplus and specialization implied as well the *exchange* of goods and services, locally or over great distances. A commercial revolution had begun.

V. All in all, Africa had been transformed. The essentials of the Iron Age are still visible in rural Africa today. The groundwork for the more specific histories we investigate in the rest of the course was in place.

**Suggested Reading:**

Erik Gilbert and Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*, pp. 27–36.

John Reader, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*, chapters 16–19.

Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, pp. 14–18, 29–45, 49–61.

Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, pp. 10–30.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Is agriculture necessarily preferable to hunting and gathering? Why or why not?
2. At the end of the day, do you think iron made more difference in military or nonmilitary (e.g., agricultural and craft tool) applications?

## Lecture Six

### Kinship and Community—Societies Take Shape

**Scope:** Although there are endless varieties in the ways African societies were organized, in this lecture, we examine some common and crucial kinds of relationships and identities. Kinship is a human universal, but in Africa, marriage, family, and descent have assumed certain particular forms. Thus, our attention is drawn to monogamy versus polygamy and to the importance of *unilineal*—that is, patrilineal or matrilineal—descent groups, lineages, and clans. *Age sets*, uniting males or females of approximately the same age, were fundamental units in many places. The lecture is especially concerned with the nature of ethnicity in Africa. What, after all, is a “tribe,” and what has that word connoted over there—and over here? Additionally, we consider the roles and status enjoyed by—or imposed upon—African women.

### Outline

- I. Iron Age African societies took an endless variety of forms. Nonetheless, we will describe in this lecture certain kinds of “building blocks”—units binding individuals together—that repeatedly appeared in the structure and functioning of African communities.
- II. One key to locating such building blocks is to consider the universal questions surrounding “identity.” Every person struggles in some way with such questions as: Who am I? What am I a part of? Who are “my people”? Who are *those* people? What makes them similar or different from “my people”?
- III. Identities are always multiple. Everyone can give several answers to “Who are you?”: “I am a Smith (or a Jones), I am a Christian (or a Jew), I am a lawyer (or a student), I am Irish (or Zulu),” and not least, “I am male (or female), I am black (or white).” The specific answer given depends on the context.
- IV. Still, certain kinds of identity seem to be privileged. I will note three.
  - A. Relationships built on *kinship* are important everywhere, but perhaps especially so in Africa. Kinship can be literal—relations by blood or marriage, by identifiable descent—or assumed.
  - B. *Ethnic* identity, which in some ways can be considered a form of imagined or generalized kinship, is very important and will be addressed in depth later in this lecture.
  - C. Membership in a *political unit*—a country, a nation, a chiefdom, a kingdom—is often a vital form of identity. In many of the lectures to follow, we will trace the rise and fall of precisely such units.
- V. Let’s focus for a bit on kinship in Africa.
  - A. Marriage—and the families that result—are, again, universals. With due caution given the dangers of generalization, we can offer some characteristics of family relations common in Africa in the past and/or the present.
    1. Although polygamous marriage certainly has a history in the Western world, it is safe to say that it has shown more staying power in Africa. And the particular form, perhaps not surprisingly, has been polygyny—more than one wife.
    2. In general, polygynous households are more likely to emerge around a powerful or wealthy male. In today’s Africa, look to older generations and rural settings; among the young and urban, the practice is increasingly unusual.
    3. Extended—as opposed to nuclear—families loom larger. A given household was and is more likely to be more inclusive vertically (more than one generation) or laterally (what we would call cousins, nephews or nieces, and so on).
  - B. Unilineal descent groups have been quite important units of identity and solidarity.
    1. In *patrilineal* systems, a child inherits membership in the group (the clan or lineage) from the father; in *matrilineal* systems, from the mother.
    2. Only males can *pass on* membership in a clan to children under patriliney; only females under matriliney.

- 3. Don't confuse *matrilineal* with *matriarchal*, which means rule by females. It is quite possible, and indeed has been the rule, to see matrilineal societies where males nonetheless dominate power and wealth.
- 4. Although patrilineal systems are more common in Africa, there are substantial "matrilineal belts" in several regions.
- 5. Membership in a particular descent group tends to matter most at critical "milestones" of life—birth, marriage, the birth of one's children, and death (which raises inheritance)—or at times of stress or crisis, when one needs help or is obliged to give it.
- C. In many parts of Africa, *age sets* (or *age grades*), uniting males or females born within a few years of one another, have occupied important places in the social structure.
  - 1. Age sets are not based on actual kinship; members are drawn from all the families and clans in a given area. But members develop a quasi kinship from going through such experiences as initiation into adulthood.
  - 2. As such, age sets (like *exogamy*, marrying someone outside one's own clan) "cut across"—and bind together—people otherwise divided by descent groups.
  - 3. Cross-cutting ties like these were particularly vital in maintaining cohesion in stateless societies without the enforcing authority of chiefs or kings.

**VI.** We've been discussing kinship; without gender—males and females—of course, there is no kinship. Perhaps it is a good time to raise the question of women's status in African societies.

- A. Easy generalizations about oppressed African women are fraught with danger. Were there powerful African queens? Yes. Formidable female soldiers? Yes. Do ordinary women have considerable resources of power? Yes.
- B. Still, we would err to imagine an essential equality, past or present (equally true of many—most?—other places as well, of course).
- C. Such issues as polygyny, bride wealth, and perhaps, above all, "female circumcision" present a considerable test for notions of "cultural relativism."

**VII.** Now, what about Africa's legendary "tribes"?

- A. The word *tribe* itself has an interesting history. In the Western world, it has often conveyed images of the primitive, the savage, and the uncivilized.
- B. Africans themselves, on the other hand, usually use the term in quite neutral fashion, to get at *ethnic identity*.
- C. And ethnic identity matters. But what exactly is it?
  - 1. Ethnic identity usually implies descent from a particular population that was once, at least, concentrated in a particular "homeland," even if many, perhaps most, of the descendants are now scattered far and wide.
  - 2. It usually implies a degree of *cultural difference*—different styles of music, or cuisine, or clothing, for instance. But beware: This has often been the stuff of stereotype.
  - 3. In Africa, if I had to bet on one criterion of cultural difference to distinguish between ethnic groups, I would bet on differences in *language*.
  - 4. Is "race" part of ethnic identity? It often seems so; I would suggest they are different, though overlapping, categories.
  - 5. I cannot emphasize strongly enough that no single criterion always works when describing ethnicity in Africa. It is often complex and multilayered.
  - 6. Equally, it is fluid and changeable, not primeval and fixed. As we shall see, ethnic identity can expand—indeed, it can be "born"—and contract in particular historical circumstances.
  - 7. And, finally, ethnic identity is just one form of identity, sometimes extremely important; other times, not at all. Western media, unfortunately, has a tendency to assume that "tribe" trumps everything else in Africa.
  - 8. My suggestion, then, is: Don't ignore it; don't exaggerate it. Look at context.

**Suggested Reading:**

Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, chapters 1, 5–6.

James H. Vaughan, “Population and Social Organization,” in Phyllis Martin and Patrick O’Meara, eds., *Africa*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why do you think matrilineal descent systems emerge in some places and patrilineal in others?
2. What do you think of when you hear the word *tribe*? Is it a useful or acceptable term?

## Lecture Seven

### Like Nothing Else—The Ancient Nile Valley

**Scope:** In this lecture, we reconnect the history of ancient Egypt with the African world without divorcing it from the worlds of the Mediterranean or Near East, of which it is also obviously a part. In its longevity, complexity, and architectural splendor, pharaonic Egypt is practically *sui generis*, a subject that could be (and is!) an entire Teaching Company course. Here, we wish to look at Egypt in the context of a longer stretch of the Nile and, thus, link it to centers of culture and power upstream, further south: Nubia, Kush, Meroe. We investigate the ways in which modern debates over “race” (were the Egyptians “black”?) and “civilization” have literally colored perceptions of the ancient Nile.

#### Outline

- I.** There’s nothing quite like ancient Egypt. Although Egypt lies outside our course’s sub-Saharan Africa area of coverage, its history—and greatly varying approaches to that history—have played such vivid roles in interpretations of world history and African history that we cannot ignore it.
- II.** For nearly 3,000 years, the Lower Nile Valley demonstrated, despite numerous dynastic changes, a basic political and cultural continuity. Its achievements in art, literature, science, and perhaps, above all, architecture continue to astound.
- III.** Egypt illustrates just how far possibilities could be changed by the food- production revolution we discussed in Lecture Five.
  - A.** The ultimate basis of the Egyptian wonder was an incredible leap in agricultural productivity along the Nile.
    - 1. The key to this, of course, was the annual flood of the Nile. Atop the rich deposits of silt, comparatively limited amounts of labor could yield previously unthinkable amounts of agricultural wealth.
    - 2. The narrowness of the populated riverine valley and the ease of navigation made it possible for the tax collectors of the pharaoh to reach producers and tap the resources that underwrote the grand projects we still find captivating.
  - B.** Perhaps surprisingly, Egypt in its heyday did not employ iron tools but did make extensive use of copper and, eventually, bronze ones. And its expertise in metallurgy is shown also, of course, in legendary Egyptian gold.
  - C.** Such was Egypt’s prosperity and the resultant population increase that it is possible that, at the kingdom’s height, half of all people living in Africa resided there.
- IV.** The idea of “civilization” and the related question of the “origin of civilization” have embroiled Egypt in controversy, precisely because it seems to embody so much of the very concept of civilization.
  - A.** We need to be cautious here; merely discussing civilization often has an “us versus them” or “civilization versus barbarism” connotation. More objective sources define a civilized society as one that establishes cities or that is literate or produces monumental architecture or displays an elaborate division of labor.
  - B.** Was Egypt the fount of “Western civilization”? Was Greece possible without it? I would tend to agree with African scholar Ali Mazrui that Egypt was “a necessary precondition, though not a sufficient one.”
  - C.** Here the modern obsession with “race” enters the arena. A century ago, prominent American scholars pronounced Egyptian crania they studied “Caucasian”—white, in other words.
  - D.** In more recent decades, the counterargument emerged: Egypt was not just African, but *black* African. This became a central tenet of some strains of Afrocentrism.
  - E.** My own view is what I might presumptuously call common sense.
    - 1. It is important to distinguish between modern Egypt and ancient Egypt. Today, Egypt is properly seen as a central part of the Arab world. But the Arab invasions of Egypt did not begin until the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D.—a thousand years after ancient Egypt’s fall.

2. In general, peoples' skin color closer to the equator was darker and, farther from it, lighter. This might suggest that Egypt's original population, on average, was somewhere between the averages in central Africa and central Europe.
3. Egypt was at a crossroads of Africa, the Mediterranean, and Southwest Asia. It is reasonable to expect that peoples of various origins lived there.
4. Much more important, there is good evidence that people in the ancient world did not think of "racial categories" in the way that modern peoples have. Thus, we run the constant risk of imposing classifications on peoples who did not see things that way at all.

V. Egypt is indisputably part of the African continent; this does not require divorcing it from the Mediterranean world or the world of the Near East. These are not "either/or" issues.

- A. To find a firmer link with the rest of Africa, let us look upstream (south) on the Nile, into the area historically known as Nubia (now the northern parts of the modern country of Sudan).
  1. The findings in this area from the earliest period are those of the University of Chicago archaeologist Bruce Williams, who discovered royal tombs and cemeteries dating from 3800–3100 B.C., revealing the lost kingdom of Ta Seti, or Land of the Bow. Williams claims that the notion of divine kingship and statebuilding derived from this kingdom.
  2. Some 4,000 years ago, a major kingdom centered at Kerma on the Nile emerged. Kush, as this and its successor states came to be called, was likely the second oldest state in Africa (the third oldest, if Williams is correct).
  3. Over a period of 2,000 years, relations between Kush and Egypt—economic, political, and cultural—were substantial and complex. There were several swings of the power pendulum; Egypt occupied Kush at times, but around 750 B.C., these Nubians invaded Egypt and ruled it for nearly a century as Egypt's 25<sup>th</sup> dynasty.
  4. In some ways, Kushites showed considerable Egyptian influence: They built pyramids, and the kings referred to themselves as pharaohs.
  5. In other respects, however, Kush was quite independent. Its alphabetic script (still undeciphered) differed fundamentally from Egyptian hieroglyphics.
- B. In the centuries leading up to the birth of Jesus, the capital of Kush shifted south, to the city of Meroe. Here, a major iron industry developed—"the Birmingham of Central Africa," as one writer called it. Given Meroe's wide trading contacts, it is reasonable to view it as an important center for iron-knowledge diffusion.

VI. Through Kush, then, we find a credible link between ancient Egypt and Africa to the south. Kush and Egypt influenced each other, and Kush was, in the words of the eminent historian Roland Oliver, "the prototype of the later states of the sub-Saharan savanna."

#### **Suggested Reading:**

Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*.

Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*.

Erik Gilbert and Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*, chapter 3.

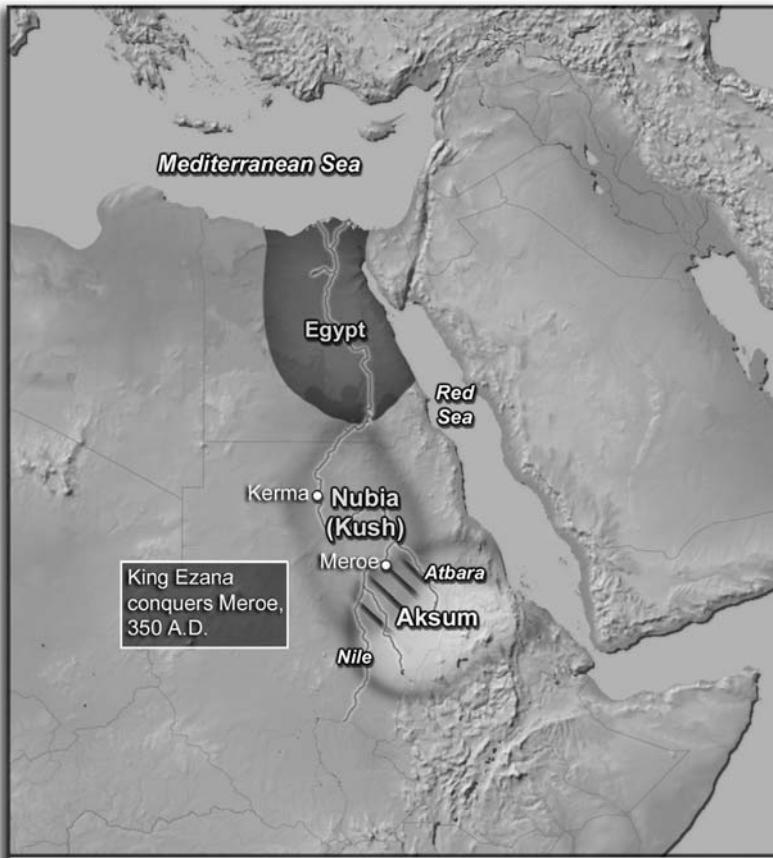
Mary Lefkowitz, *Not Out of Africa: How "Afrocentrism" Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History*.

Roland Oliver, *The African Experience*, chapter 5.

Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, pp. 18–29.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

1. Why has ancient Egypt been such a "powder keg" of contention in *modern* history?
2. What is *civilization*, anyway?



## Egypt, Kush, and Aksum

The Egyptian civilization that endured for some 3,000 years along the Nile Valley is familiar to us, but another great kingdom, the Kushite Kingdom centered around Kerma, also with monumental architecture, emerged c. 2000 B.C. In the centuries leading up to the birth of Jesus, the Kushite locus of power shifted to Meroe, where the Kushite civilization endured until 350 A.D., when Meroe was conquered by the Ethiopian King Ezana. At this point, Aksum, a kingdom known for, among other things, its great stone obelisks, began to flourish.

## Lecture Eight

### Soul and Spirit—Religion in Africa

**Scope:** Religion, broadly defined, has always held a central place in African cultures. We begin this lecture by identifying some common characteristics of the hundreds of local or regionally based indigenous religions across the continent. We investigate the nature of deities, ancestral shades, and other spiritual entities and how they were—and are—believed to interact with the mundane world. The lecture then offers an overview of the long-run impact on Africa of two great world religions—Christianity and Islam. We look at how and when Christianity and Islam came to particular regions of Africa and with what effect. Throughout, we emphasize the *syncretic* nature of religious thought and practice, that is, the ways in which the elements from different religious traditions are often combined.

### Outline

- I. Religion, or more broadly the spiritual world and its relation to the mundane, is, of course, a universal human question and most certainly a central concern for Africans, past and present.
  - A. The object of this lecture is to provide a broad overview of indigenous African religions and spiritual ideas and of the courses by which two great world religions, Christianity and Islam, affected various parts of the continent.
  - B. The themes of religious and spiritual change—that is, the history of these things—will reappear in more specific contexts in a number of succeeding lectures.
- II. The indigenous religions of Africa were predominantly local religions, in other words specific to particular peoples or ethnic groups and to particular places. Thus, we face the daunting task of trying to draw out commonalities from hundreds of different systems. It is always dangerous to generalize but important enough, on this subject, to try (and to illustrate with concrete examples).
  - A. Like so much else about Africa, its religious life has been the stuff of Western stereotype—in this case, so much “mumbo-jumbo.” Even more sympathetic voices use such terms as *fetishism* or *animism*, which obscure as much as they describe. I assure you, there is nothing simple about spiritual ideas in Africa; if anything, they are formidably complex.
  - B. Let us start at the top: Almost everywhere, we find a belief in a supreme being, “God” if you like—Olorun to the Yoruba of Nigeria, Mogai (or Ngai) to the Kikuyu of Kenya, and Leza to the Tonga of Zambia. The creator, he (occasionally, she or he/she) is the ultimate source of the “power” (we might say “soul force”—including moral power—that runs through everything).
  - C. In West Africa, in particular, we are likely to find a series of lesser “gods” associated with certain kinds of power—thunder and lightning, for instance, or iron (that’s how important iron was). The deities in the Yoruba pantheon—and the countless stories and myths about them—remind many of Greek or Roman cosmology.
  - D. Myths of the creation of humans—by God—are common. The Kikuyu tale of the first people of their “tribe”—Kikuyu (male) and Moombi (female)—is remarkably similar at points to the book of Genesis.
  - E. There are myriad earth spirits—usually connected with particular places (groves of trees, mountains, bodies of water). These can affect what happens in or around these places. Some are oracles, which can speak to humans, rendering advice or judgment through a priest or medium.
  - F. Ancestral spirits are particularly important; missionaries quickly learned that “life after death” was not a new idea here. Ancestors need attention and veneration; they expect you to behave in a moral fashion; they can certainly create fortune or misfortune, especially for members of their descent line.
  - G. Certain persons have the power to manipulate spiritual force, to direct it toward—or against—others; the general word for this would be *witchcraft*. Diviners, on the other hand, use various techniques to determine who is bewitching someone (or which ancestor is angry and so forth).
  - H. Witchcraft and earth spirits have long histories in the Western world as well, of course. But—and here is my largest and doubtless most dangerous generalization—in general, the belief that many kinds of spiritual power can directly affect human events has lasted longer in Africa.

1. In my view, it is simply folly to ignore the idea that spiritual forces have had widespread credibility in Africa. This may or may not be diminishing, but it is relatively wider than in the recent West.
2. To put it differently, African people are relatively less likely to attribute something—a windfall, an illness, a death—to “chance” and more likely to attribute it to spiritual power, perhaps wielded by living persons, perhaps not.

**III.** Of course, over the last 2,000 years, there has been much religious change in Africa, a considerable amount of it occasioned by the spread of Christianity and Islam.

- A. The faithful in both of these religions are “people of the book”—they accept that fundamental and universal religious truth is embodied in central written texts.
- B. This belief imparts a greater potential for unity across places and cultures. The briefest look at the history of either religion, however, reveals serious—sometimes deadly serious—divisions within each.

**IV.** Let us begin with the older faith, Christianity.

- A. In the first centuries after Jesus’ life, Christianity spread in the Mediterranean world, including Egypt and North Africa. In Egypt, there developed *Coptic* Christianity, which adhered to monophysite (single divine nature of Christ) doctrine.
- B. From Egypt, Coptic Christianity spread in the 4<sup>th</sup> century to Ethiopia—which is the subject of our next lecture.
- C. And there, the spread of Christianity would stop for something like a millennium—partly because of Arab/Muslim invasions of North Africa in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.
- D. The Portuguese brought their Catholic faith to many ports along the African littoral beginning in the late 1400s. There were notable conversions, such as the king of the Kongo state in West/Central Africa, but in general, the impact was quite limited.
- E. The next expansion came in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with a revival of evangelism in Europe, symbolized by such figures as David Livingstone. It is worth noting, however, that some of the most successful early missionaries were, in fact, Africans themselves—such as Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who converted in Sierra Leone but returned to his native Yoruba to spread the gospel.
- F. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, of course, Christianity was associated with European colonial rule; importantly, almost all Western-style education was run by missions. Conversion certainly increased during the colonial era—but so did the numbers of “independent” churches, which resented and seceded from control by Europeans.

**V.** Islam, perhaps the most genuinely monotheistic of religions, was founded by the prophet Muhammad in Arabia in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Beginning in that century, Arabs spread the faith in many directions—most importantly, for our purposes, right across North Africa.

- A. Although “Christianity and Commerce” became the watchwords for Christian evangelism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in fact, there is a more consistent connection between Islam and commerce. Islam came across the Sahara to the savanna belt of West Africa as part of caravan commerce (see Lecture Ten); it came to the East African coast from Arabia and Persia as part of the Swahili commercial culture (Lecture Eleven). These two regions remain the most heavily Muslim parts of the continent today.
- B. More than Christianity, Islam has seen periods of fervent revivalist and purification movements—sometimes taking the form of *jihad*, holy war, especially in the West African savanna.
- C. In South Africa, Islam came in a completely different way: with slaves imported from Indonesia and Southeast Asia (Lecture Fifteen).

**VI.** Many millions of Africans, then—hundreds of millions today—have been happy or proud to call themselves “Christians” or “Muslims.” This is a historical fact of major importance.

- A. Yet I would enter a word of caution: Conversion of a person or a community to one of these religions does not necessarily mean the rejection of older, indigenous religious ideas. The same person might beseech Jesus and the ancestors for rain; or seek Allah’s protection against witchcraft.
- B. This blending of different religious traditions is *syncretic* religious practice.

C. Finally, let us note that both Christianity and Islam have seen dramatic growth since the end of colonial rule. Who would have predicted that? Is the reason for this wave of new contemporary conversions the search for an anchor in a “new age” that turned out to disappoint?

**Suggested Reading:**

Edward Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*.

David Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Do you think belief in supernatural power—witchcraft, for instance—will wane or wax in the future Africa?
2. What do you think explains the dramatic growth of Islam and, even more so, Pentecostal Christianity in the recent past?

## Lecture Nine

### Ethiopia—Outpost of Christianity

**Scope:** Originally known as Aksum (or Axum), the Ethiopian kingdom's history can be traced back to the early centuries A.D. It was in the 4<sup>th</sup> century that the monarch converted to Christianity, marking the start of nearly 1,700 years of dominance by a Christian nobility in this mountainous region of northeastern Africa. In this lecture, we survey the varying fortunes of the Ethiopian state, often threatened but never quite eclipsed by outside pressures—until Mussolini's invasion of 1935. We look at the monastic traditions of the Ethiopian clergy and the astonishing churches carved out of solid rock. The last of the “King of Kings,” Haile Selassie, was finally deposed by Marxist revolutionaries in 1974 (since, in turn, overthrown as well). Ethiopia provides the only example of border change in postcolonial Africa, with the secession of Eritrea.

### Outline

- I. In the last lecture, we surveyed religious themes in African history, including the spread of Islam and Christianity. For a very long time—well over 1,000 years—there was only one place in Africa where Christianity could be called the dominant religion—Ethiopia. In this lecture, we examine the unique history of Ethiopia over the long haul.
- II. Much of Ethiopia is high, mountainous country, associated with the Great Rift.
  - A. The fertile soils of the country have meant that it has sustained quite high population density.
  - B. It has one of the longest histories of agriculture in the world.
- III. The kingdom that developed in the Ethiopian region in the early centuries A.D. was known as Aksum (or Axum). (See map at the end of Lecture Seven.)
  - A. The basis of the kingdom's wealth was agricultural, but its external trade, through the Red Sea port of Adulis, was largely in ivory.
  - B. The people's language was Ge'ez, the basis of modern Amharic, and they had already developed their own, quite unique literary script.
  - C. They built tall stone monoliths known as *stellae* to mark the tombs of rulers, some of which stand today.
- IV. Coptic Christians from Alexandria in Egypt arrived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The Aksumite King Ezana converted during his reign, from A.D. 330 to 350.
  - A. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century, however, the rulers of Aksum, buffeted by Arab/Muslim and Persian pressure, had retreated further south, into the central highlands of modern Ethiopia. The isolation encouraged development of a distinctly monastic Christian tradition.
  - B. In 1150, founders of the Zagwe dynasty seized power and ushered in an era of aggressive Christian expansion in the region.
  - C. In the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, Christian monks began building a series of churches carved out of solid mountain rock. These churches, “testament to the strength and fervor of the Ethiopian Christian Church,” remain among the most astonishing architectural marvels of sub-Saharan Africa.
- V. In 1270, the Solomonid dynasty seized the Ethiopian throne. The rulers claimed descent from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.
  - A. Solomon and Sheba's son David, who took the name Menelik, is claimed to be the founder of the Ethiopian state.
    - 1. The Ethiopian monks claim that Menelik brought the Ark of the Covenant (c. 1250 B.C.) into Ethiopia and that it is still there in one of the Ethiopian Christian churches.
    - 2. No one is allowed to see the Ark of the Covenant, but replicas of the Ark are in every one of the more than 20,000 Christian churches in Ethiopia.
    - 3. There was also an African Jewish community in Ethiopia called the Falasha. Most of them fled to Israel after the fall of Haile Selassie.

- B. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the new royalty ceased building in stone and, in fact, moved the capital frequently, apparently in part because of exhaustion of local resources. Some of the environmental deterioration that in our own time has contributed to famine is evident here.
- C. Over the next several centuries, Ethiopia was often under pressure from Muslim merchant/military penetration from the east and from Oromo pastoralists in the south. In fact, substantial sections of the area comprising modern Ethiopia were occupied by these parties.
- D. Even closer to home, many regions were under the sway of local nobility and the Church, both great landholders, rather than the central monarchy. It is for good reason that Ethiopia has often been described as feudal.

**VI.** In 1855, a provincial governor, after modernizing his locally based army, seized the monarchy and took the title Tewodros (Theodore) II.

- A. Tewodros succeeded to a considerable degree in establishing a more effective centralized government. Predictably, this earned him the enmity of some in the Church and landed aristocracy.
- B. In 1868, the arrest of a British consul led to a brief but forceful British invasion to free him. With the encouragement of the Church, many of Tewodros's soldiers deserted, and he himself committed suicide.

**VII.** The British withdrew, but we are approaching the era when most of Africa was colonized by Europeans during the so-called "scramble" (see Lectures Nineteen and Twenty). In the late 1880s and 1890s, Italy moved to take over Ethiopia.

- A. By this time, the Ethiopian king was Menelik II, who took power in 1889 and, like Tewodros, proved himself a skillful ruler and military modernizer.
- B. Menelik grudgingly recognized establishment of an Italian colony in the coastal strip of Eritrea. But in 1896, he inflicted a resounding defeat on the Italians at Adwa.

**VIII.** The significance of Menelik's repulsion of the Italians can hardly be overstated. Aside from Liberia (founded by freed African-American slaves), Ethiopia was the only place in Africa not colonized by Europeans in this period.

- A. Independent Ethiopia was an inspiration to Africans in Africa and in the diaspora.
- B. Indeed, the emperor through much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *Ras Tafari* or Haile Selassie, was seen by many as a symbol of African pride.

**IX.** Alas, Europeans returned with a vengeance.

- A. Mussolini, determined to avenge his nation's humiliation in 1896, invaded Ethiopia in 1935 and seized most of the country.
- B. In exile, Haile Selassie went before the League of Nations and made a dramatic plea to international leaders to confront such aggression. Their failure to do so was viewed by many as a seminal moment, leading to World War II and demonstrating contempt for Africa.
- C. Allied forces succeeding in expelling the Italians in 1941 and, somewhat reluctantly, recognized Ethiopia's restored independence. Haile Selassie returned to the throne.
- D. Although both Ethiopia and Haile Selassie symbolized African pride to many Africans and African Americans, at home in Ethiopia, the reality was not quite so happy. Selassie reigned as perhaps the last of the absolute monarchs.

**X.** Haile Selassie met his own reckoning in 1974, when committed Marxist military officers overthrew his government and ended at last the Ethiopian monarchy, after something like 1,700 years.

- A. The brutality of the new regime, in the name of revolution, spawned its own seeds of destruction and was itself overthrown in the late 1980s.
- B. Among the new rulers' problems were armed secession movements in Tigray and Eritrea.
- C. Eritrea indeed broke away and established its own independence. A great many—including your lecturer—have noted the artificiality of Africa's borders, drawn by colonialists, but this is the only instance in postcolonial Africa of an actual, legal, formal change.

**Suggested Reading:**

Ryszard Kapuściński, *The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat*.

Harold Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*.

Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, pp. 107–115, 284–288.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. To what extent does Ethiopia represent a unique chapter in the history of Christianity?
2. How would you assess the legacy of Haile Selassie?

## Lecture Ten

### West Africa's "Golden Age"

**Scope:** Over more than a millennium, between about the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D., the West African savanna region was dominated by a succession of major kingdoms and empires. In this lecture, we explore the rise, development, and eventual decline of three legendary states: Ghana, Mali, and Songhai. Each of these brought together various ethnic groups and sub-rulers under umbrellas of dynastic power. Our survey allows us to illustrate the religious themes introduced in Lecture Eight, in this case by looking at the role of Islam in these empires. We also analyze the crucial part played by long-distance trade across the Sahara, in salt and, especially, gold. Finally, we examine the quite real town behind one word everyone has heard "out of Africa"—Timbuktu.

### Outline

- I. Over a period of 1,000 years, between about the 5<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D., a series of major empires flowered in the West African savanna. Such was the scale and fame of these states—Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, among others—and such was the literal importance of gold that the era is sometimes referred to as West Africa's "Golden Age."
- II. Before we continue, we should define what a *state* is. Generally three criteria define states:
  - A. They have centralized, formalized authority; in other words, someone is in charge.
  - B. They have agents who carry out the business of the state. They may be bureaucrats or armed agents, such as soldiers.
  - C. They have judicial institutions. These courts are not always fair, but they exist to resolve disputes and control crime.
- III. Africa produced many *stateless* societies that seem to reflect a healthy suspicion of power and were not at all the anarchies we might assume. But there emerges a quite clear trend of statebuilding, almost century by century.
- IV. This might be a good time to pause and identify what seem to be some factors underlying this trend, which we have glimpsed in our looks at Egypt, Kush, and Ethiopia and are well illustrated in the West African savanna kingdoms.
  - A. Total population and population density, we know, increased with Iron Age agriculture. It would appear that informal, lineage-based means of resolving disputes and maintaining order were increasingly inadequate.
  - B. Security is clearly a major factor. Agricultural societies with crops in the ground cannot pick them up and flee. The need to organize for defense may have led to authority structures that, under different circumstances or leadership, might turn *offensive*.
  - C. There seems a quite clear correlation between the rise of states and the rise of long-distance trade: States are good for trade through providing security, and trade is good for states—they can tax it to support state structures, such as bureaucracy and armed forces.
- V. The best known of the early Iron Age states of the West African Sudan was Ghana. The name *Ghana* was adopted by the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence in 1957—the former British colony of the Gold Coast. But there is no direct connection between the two—ancient Ghana lay several hundred miles northwest of the modern nation.
  - A. Ancient Ghana, straddling the Sahel and savanna, was well situated to take advantage of trading networks across the Sahara.
    1. The trans-Saharan trade was revolutionized by the introduction in the 3<sup>rd</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries (by North African Berber nomads) of the "ship of the desert"—the camel.
    2. Ghana's traders and rulers prospered by assuming a middleman position between resources of salt to the north and gold from the Bure goldfields to the southeast.

3. Ghana's core ethnic group was the Soninke. Soninke kings—who claimed automatic rights over gold nuggets (as opposed to dust)—were able to extend their power over numerous other communities.

B. After the 7<sup>th</sup> century, of course, Ghana's trading partners to the north were increasingly likely to be Muslims. Trade was the most obvious vehicle bringing the faith into the Sudan.

1. However, for quite a long time, Islam appears to have been tolerated rather than embraced. A description of the Ghanaian capital, Kumbi-Saleh, shows a town divided by religion.
2. Eventually, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Ghana's rulers did convert. Although this may be assumed to have provided a fillip to wider conversion, how wide or deep this went among the general population is an open question.

VI. In the early 1200s, rivals to the Soninke kings of Ghana emerged. A young Malinke chief eventually proved triumphant—Sundiata, founder of the most legendary West African empire of all, Mali.

A. The story of Sundiata is the basis of the most famous epic from Africa—transmitted in its considerable length orally for several centuries and eventually recorded, translated, and published in many versions.

B. Sundiata himself seems to illustrate the symbiotic nature of religious conversion—described as a devout Muslim in some contexts, still clearly concerned with older, land-based spirits in others.

C. By its peak in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the *mansas* (kings) of ancient Mali ruled an empire stretching thousands of miles from the Atlantic Ocean eastward across the savanna. Still heavily involved in the trans-Saharan trade, Mali had a much broader agricultural base than Ghana.

D. Islam became more prominent. *Mansa* Kankan Musa's famous pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324–1325 put Mali on the map of the Muslim and medieval European worlds.

1. He encouraged Muslim scholarship and literacy using the Arabic script.
2. He distributed so much gold in passing through what is now Cairo on his way home that his journey was blamed for the devaluation of gold at that time.

VII. As Mali's power waned in the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, pride of place passed to the empire of Songhai. Its center of gravity was further east, along the middle reaches of the Niger River.

A. The founder was Sonni Ali, who, despite his name, was generally considered an apostate in Muslim sources. But he was a formidable general, using horses and war boats.

B. His heir was overthrown by the more devout Muhammed Ture, founder of the *Askiya* dynasty. He is credited with centralizing administration, reviving the trade in gold and salt (as well as cotton, kola, and horses)—and, like *Mansa* Musa before him, making the *hajj*—the pilgrimage.

C. Songhai's power was finally broken in 1591 by the Moroccan army invading from the north—and using a new weapon, muzzle-loading firearms.

VIII. A prominent city in both Mali and Songhai was Timbuktu, located at the edge of the desert on the far north bend of the Niger River. The familiarity of the word *Timbuktu* in the Western world suggests its fame at one point, even if few could identify it.

A. Originally a settlement of Tuareg nomads, Timbuktu became a thriving market center and entrepôt of the trans-Saharan trade.

B. Even more so, it became a focal point of intellectual life, supporting a thriving book trade and a large community of Islamic scholars.

#### **Suggested Reading:**

Adu Boahen (with J. F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Tidy), *Topics in West African History*, chapters 1–6.

Erik Gilbert and Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*, chapter 6.

Camara Laye, *The Guardian of the Word*.

Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, chapters 6–7.

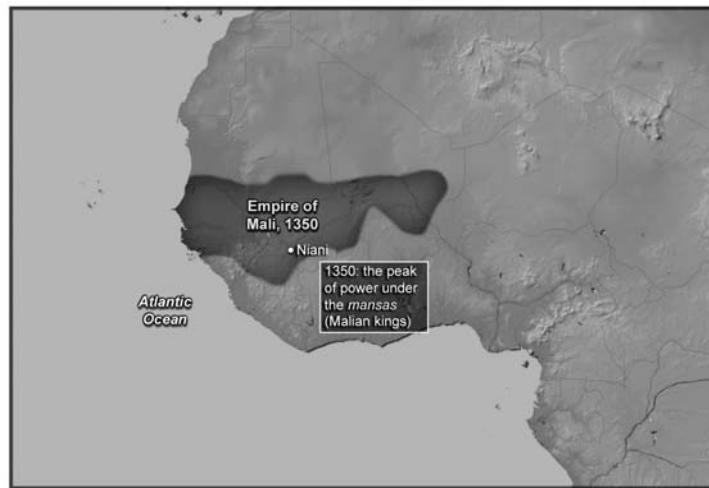
#### **Questions to Consider:**

1. Are states good things or simply necessary? Are they fundamental to “civilization”?
2. Why do you think *Timbuktu* became such a byword in the Western world?



## The Empire of Ghana, 1000 A.D.

The ancient kingdom of Ghana was well situated to benefit from the trade that emerged from the 3rd-5th century as the "ship of the desert," the camel, revolutionized trans-Saharan commerce. After the 7th century, Ghana's trading partners to the north were most likely to be Muslim, though conversion to Islam was not widespread until the 11th century. Ghana's traders were middlemen for the trade in gold, salt, slaves, and other commodities that traveled from West Africa all the way to the Mediterranean.



#### The Empire of Mali:

By its peak in the 14th century, the *mansas* (kings) of ancient Mali ruled an empire stretching thousands of miles. Founded by the legendary Sundiata in the 1200s, it reached its height under Mansa Kankan Musa, famous for making the *hajj* in 1324-25.



#### The Empire of Songhai:

As Mali's power waned in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, the empire of Songhai was founded by Sonni Ali. With its center of gravity further east, along the middle reaches of the Niger River, Songhai gained pride of place in western Africa until its demise in 1591 at the hands of a Moroccan army.

## Lecture Eleven

### The Swahili Commercial World

**Scope:** Along the East African coast, as in the West African savanna, there emerged, long ago, societies firmly linked to long-distance trade. Between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, a distinct culture and language developed, known ever since as *Swahili*, from the Arabic word for “coast.” The Arabic influence is often overstated, however. It is best to see the Swahili world as basically an African one with definite influences from Arabia, including a permanent implantation of Islam. Eventually, some 40 independent Swahili city-states dotted the East African shoreline. These were urban and commercial societies, connected through Indian Ocean trading networks with Arabia, India, Persia, and the Far East. By 1500, the first European ships had rounded the southern tip of Africa and entered this world. The Portuguese sacking of the Swahili town of Kilwa in 1505 was, perhaps, an omen of things to come.

### Outline

- I. Just as major trading states arose in West Africa along the southern shore of a “sea of sand,” so in East Africa, there emerged a distinctive commercial culture on the shore of a real sea—the Indian Ocean.
- II. A remarkable document from the first century A.D., *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, written in Greek in the Roman Egyptian city of Alexandria, is essentially a guide to the Indian Ocean for Mediterranean and Red Sea trading ships. It shows quite clearly that “Azania”—as the ancient Greeks called the East African coast—was already connected commercially with areas to the north.
  - A. A series of small settlements along the coast provided ivory, tortoise shell, and coconut oil in return for ironware, cotton cloth, wheat, and wine. The southernmost of these settlements mentioned in the guide was Rapta, which probably lay along the shore of modern Tanzania.
  - B. The population here, described as tall and dark-skinned, consisted of early Iron Age peoples who engaged in mixed farming and were skilled in fishing the coves and island waters of the coast. By the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. at the latest, they were almost certainly speaking Bantu languages.
- III. In the later centuries of the first millennium A.D., trade across the greater Indian Ocean began to “take off,” and the groundwork was laid for the genuinely urban, commercial East African culture.
  - A. Sailors in improved ships—specifically the Arab *dhow*s—skillfully exploited the Indian Ocean monsoon winds, which blow essentially in one direction half the year and in the opposite the other half.
  - B. Contact was especially extensive with the Muslim societies of the Arab and Persian worlds, who referred to East Africa as “the land of Zanj” (from the Persian for “black”). By this time, it is likely that a few Arab Muslims settled in towns along the coast. And others—descendants of the indigenous population—adopted Islam.
  - C. Ivory from African elephants—considered superior to that of their Asian cousins—continued to lead the list of exports and was in particular demand in China. Ambergris, mangrove poles, and a small quantity of gold followed in importance.
  - D. Some African slaves, drawn from the coast’s hinterland, were also exported, especially to the Basra region of today’s Iraq. There, in A.D. 868, a major slave rebellion (the “Zanj revolt”) broke out.
- IV. Between about A.D. 1000 and 1500, the East African coast entered its own version of a “golden age.” The Swahili world had arrived.
  - A. In a variation on our theme of statebuilding, about 40 independent, compact city-states came to dot the coastal map, from today’s Somalia to Mozambique.
  - B. Quite cosmopolitan—goods from Arabia, Persia, India, and China were common—the cities’ elites constructed elegant homes from coral stone and mangrove.
  - C. As in West Africa, the literal importance of gold increased. In this case, the Swahili, especially the southern towns, such as Kilwa, prospered from gold mined far in the interior, on the Zimbabwean plateau (see next lecture).

- D. The Swahili world was basically African; the language of KiSwahili, for instance, is most definitely a Bantu language. This is one of the most widespread languages in Africa today and an official one in several East African countries.
- E. However, in keeping with its cosmopolitan culture, outside influences—from Islamic Arabia and Persia in particular—were certainly prominent.
  - 1. Especially between 1050 and 1200, there was further immigration from the Persian Gulf and Oman (at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula). Usually well-connected traders, these newcomers and their descendants were part of the elite.
  - 2. As we might expect, the religious impact was perhaps the greatest, and this became a quite Islamic part of Africa.

V. Around the year 1500, we reach an interesting and critical juncture, not just in East Africa but in the world as a whole (think of the date of Columbus's voyage).

- A. It is conceivable that China, which had already seen at least one recorded direct voyage to East Africa, might have expanded its influence. Instead, China turned inward.
- B. Portugal, on the other hand, sponsored an epoch-making circumnavigation of the African continent in 1498. The European incursion had begun.
- C. Just seven years later, in 1505, a Portuguese force sacked “the Queen of the South”—the Swahili town of Kilwa. Though it would take several centuries for European domination to be consolidated, the destruction of Kilwa might be seen as an omen.

**Suggested Reading:**

Erik Gilbert and Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*, chapter 7.

John Reader, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*, chapter 21.

Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, chapter 9.

**Questions to Consider:**

- 1. How would you evaluate the indigenous versus external factors in the making of Swahili culture?
- 2. Is it accurate to say that the Indian Ocean was the center of the pre-Columbian world economy?



## The Swahili Coast, 1000-1500

1000-1500 was the age of preeminence for the largely Islamic trading civilization that stretched from the coastal areas of modern-day Somalia in the north to Mozambique in the south. Using the workhorse of the sea, the dhow with the lateen sail, these traders exploited the seasonal monsoon winds to carry them across the Indian Ocean to Arabia, Persia, and even India. The traders were advantageously situated to act as a conduit for the gold and ivory coming from the Great Zimbabwe Plateau.

## Lecture Twelve

### Great Zimbabwe and the Cities of the South

**Scope:** All over Africa, as we have seen, the development of agriculture, ironworking, and trade set the stage for the emergence of states and kingdoms, often with an urban dimension. Southern Africa is no exception. In this lecture we investigate a series of Later Iron Age sites in the Southern African interior that were commercially linked with the Swahili ports we met last time. We culminate our journey at the remarkable stone ruins of Great Zimbabwe, from which the modern nation of Zimbabwe draws its name. This was the most extensive stone construction in Africa south of the Nile Valley. We get a taste of later colonial fantasy by noting that 20<sup>th</sup>-century European settlers often denied that Africans were capable of building such structures and, instead, attributed them to mysteriously vanished outsiders.

### Outline

- I. As we have seen in the last two lectures, the spread of Iron Age agriculture and pastoralism and the development of long-distance trade set the stage for the emergence of towns and states. Southern Africa is no exception.
  - A. Given that farming and ironworking generally moved southward across the continent, the Southern African subcontinent was the last major region to be transformed.
  - B. Nonetheless, radiocarbon dates for archeological research show evidence for the Iron Age package south of the Limpopo River—in modern-day South Africa—by the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. and a spread through the whole eastern half of that country by A.D. 1000.
  - C. These radiocarbon dates represent a decisive refutation of the apartheid-era myth of “the empty land,” which held that in South Africa, the majority Bantu population’s ancestors had not arrived in the country until *after* Europeans began arriving in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
  - D. It is true, however, that Bantu expansion apparently halted at the point—the 20-inch rainfall line—where there was insufficient moisture for their crops. West of that line—the Cape region, where African and European would first meet—saw the development of pastoralism but not cultivation.
- II. In the Later Iron Age, especially in the savanna grasslands of what is now western Zambia, Zimbabwe, eastern Botswana, and eastern South Africa, we see increasing wealth, complexity, stratification, and commerce.
  - A. The hilltop settlements known as the *Toutswe tradition* (after the largest excavated site in eastern Botswana) seem to illustrate the importance of increasing numbers of cattle. Control of cattle was the key to power and wealth and, because they were held by males, may have sharpened the gender divide.
  - B. Emerging slightly later was the cultural complex called *Leopard’s Kopje* (after a site in southwest Zimbabwe; *kopje* is Afrikaans for “hill”).
    - 1. Cattle remained central here.
    - 2. The peoples maximized the efficiency of cultivation in a dry climate by the use of stone terracing on hillsides. They also used stone to construct residences and cattle enclosures.
    - 3. They mined not only iron but large quantities of copper and, beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, gold.
  - C. The culmination of the Leopard’s Kopje culture was the town of Mapungubwe, located on a hill just south of the Limpopo River.
    - 1. The physical evidence suggests sharply defined hierarchy: rulers, living indeed like royalty, and poorer commoners.
    - 2. Mapungubwe was clearly connected with the Swahili-dominated east coast. Ivory and gold were traded eastward, and excavations have uncovered many glass beads from India and fine Chinese porcelain bowls at Mapungubwe.
- III. The full flowering of these southern developments is seen at Great Zimbabwe, in the modern country that adopted its name. The capital of a major Later Iron Age state, the city of Great Zimbabwe represents the largest stone ruins in Africa south of the Nile.

- A. Great Zimbabwe comprises the *hill complex*, where the kings and royals resided, and the *valley complex*, which housed the ordinary citizens of this town of perhaps 20,000, but also included the most impressive single ruin, the high-walled Great Enclosure.
  - 1. The Great Enclosure, with its passageways, stairs, and inner chamber surrounding the Conical Tower, was likely the political and, indeed, religious focal point of the nation.
  - 2. Millions of blocks of stone went into the walls of Great Zimbabwe, which must have taken many years to complete, by about the year 1300. The walls, more than 15 feet thick in places, were dry-stacked, that is, constructed without the use of mortar.
  - 3. Archeologists believe that the largest buildings were designed primarily to convey the power and prestige of the rulers, rather than for defensive or military purposes.
- B. Perched on the edge of the Zimbabwe Plateau, Great Zimbabwe was well situated to take advantage of both high- and low-country pasturage and, thus, see its wealth in cattle multiply.
- C. And it was even better placed than Mapungubwe to export gold and ivory to the east coast. Although the ruins have yielded many samples of prestige goods from India, Persia, and China, much of its treasure, including the carved stone birds of the kings' oracles, was looted when Europeans first reached the city more than a century ago.

IV. For reasons not entirely clear (human or cattle disease? exhaustion of local resources?), Great Zimbabwe was abandoned rather suddenly sometime around 1500, and the population never returned.

- A. However, the kingdom that Great Zimbabwe anchored was clearly the prototype of a series of successor states built by Zimbabwe's Shona peoples, the last of which survived to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- B. The capitals of these later states, though not as large, were constructed of stone in a similar style, perhaps even more intricate.

V. After the British, led by Cecil Rhodes, colonized Southern Rhodesia (now modern Zimbabwe), many white settlers refused to believe that Africans were capable of such creations as Great Zimbabwe. The "civilizing mission" of colonial rule, it seemed, required the absence of anything like civilization prior to its arrival.

- A. Instead, the official line was that Great Zimbabwe was a "mystery," perhaps the doing of the lost tribe of Israel, or the Queen of Sheba, or the Phoenicians, or perhaps it was somehow related to King Solomon's mines.
- B. Conducted at regular intervals, however, every professional archeological investigation for the past 100 years has reached the same essential conclusion: The ruins are of local origin, built by ancestors of the Shona, and of medieval vintage.
- C. The colonial Rhodesian mythology, then, is most revealing about the colonizers.

**Suggested Reading:**

Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, chapter 10.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Again in this lecture, we see the linkage between states and long-distance trade. In world history, are these always linked?
2. Do you think European settlers really believed Great Zimbabwe was built by non-Africans, or is there a more subtle psychology at work?

## Timeline

c. 4–3 million B.C. .... Emergence of *Australopithecus*, possibly the first in the hominid line of evolution, culminating in modern humans in East/Southern Africa.

c. 1.5 million B.C. .... Emergence of *Homo erectus* in Africa, definitely a human ancestor.

c. 100,000 B.C. .... Emergence of *Homo sapiens*, “man the wise,” in Africa.

c. 40,000 B.C. .... Emergence of *Homo sapiens sapiens*, fully modern humans, in Africa.

c. 5000 B.C. to A.D. 1000  
(depending on region) .... Closing of Late Stone Age, opening of Iron Age. Also—though not necessarily concomitant with Stone Age/Iron Age transition—closing of hunting/gathering age, onset of agriculture.

c. 3100–c. 350 B.C. .... Egypt of the pharaohs.

c. 2000–c. 100 B.C. .... Kingdom of Kush in the Nubian region of modern Sudan.

c. 750–650 B.C. .... Nubian (or 25<sup>th</sup>) dynasty rules Egypt.

c. 3<sup>rd</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. .... Introduction of camel revolutionizes trans-Saharan trade.

Mid-4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. .... Aksumite (Ethiopian) monarch converts to Christianity.

7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. .... Rapid Arab/Muslim expansion across North Africa.

c. 7<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. .... West African savanna kingdom of Ghana. Islam begins to penetrate West African savanna.

Late 1<sup>st</sup> millennium A.D. .... Emergence of trading states in Southern Africa, such as Mapungubwe.

c. 11<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries .... Swahili city-states emerge on East African coast.

c. 12<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries .... Kingdom of Great Zimbabwe.

Early 13<sup>th</sup> century .... Ethiopian Christian monks begin building a series of churches carved out of solid mountain rock.

Early 13<sup>th</sup> century .... Sundiata founds West African savanna kingdom of Mali.

c. 1300 .... Completion of stone buildings at Great Zimbabwe.

1324–1325 .... King (*Mansa*) Musa of Mali makes epic pilgrimage to Mecca.

Early 15<sup>th</sup> century .... Sonni Ali founds West African savanna kingdom of Songhai.

1492 .... Columbus’s voyage marks the opening of the *Atlantic System* linking Africa, Europe, and the Americas.

1498 .... Portuguese circumnavigation of Africa, around the Cape of Good Hope and into the Indian Ocean.

1505 .... Portuguese sacking of the Swahili city-state of Kilwa.

16<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries .... Atlantic slave trade brings millions of Africans to the New World.

1591 .... Moroccans—with firearms—invade and defeat Songhai.

1619 .... First Africans brought to Virginia.

1652 .... Dutch establish post at Cape Town.

1657 .... Dutch East India Company releases nine employees, who end up as the first white settlers in what becomes South Africa.

1658 .... Dutch import the first slaves *into* Cape Colony.

1779 ..... First conflict between Europeans and Xhosa—part of the southern Bantu peoples—in “South Africa.”

1795–1806 ..... British take over Cape Colony.

1807 ..... Britain outlaws international traffic in slaves; West Africa’s era of “legitimate commerce” soon underway.

c. early–mid-19<sup>th</sup> century ..... Islamic reform movements—many involving *jihad*, or holy war—emerge in the West African savanna.

1818–1828 ..... Shaka Zulu’s decade in power, when he founds the modern Zulu kingdom.

1820 ..... First British settlers come to Cape.

1836–1845 ..... Afrikaner (or Boer) “Great Trek” out of Cape Colony and into the interior.

1867 ..... Diamonds discovered at Kimberley.

1879 ..... Zulu/British war; Zulu finally conquered.

c. 1880–1905 ..... “Scramble for Africa.” Almost all of Africa taken over by European empires; onset of Africa’s colonial period.

1884–1845 ..... Berlin Conference of European powers considers “ground rules” for the scramble for Africa.

1886 ..... Gold discovered near Johannesburg.

1896 ..... Ethiopian Emperor Menelik defeats Italian army at Adwa; Ethiopia avoids colonization.

1899–1902 ..... South African, or Boer, War between British and Afrikaners; Afrikaners finally defeated.

1910 ..... Union of South Africa formed.

1912 ..... African National Congress founded in South Africa.

1913 ..... South African Natives Land Act establishes separate white and black areas.

1914–1918 ..... World War I; the only major non-European theater is in East Africa, where there are both British and German colonies.

1935 ..... Italy succeeds (finally) in taking over Ethiopia.

1935–1945 ..... Numerous labor strikes across the breadth of colonial Africa; examples of proto-nationalist urban unrest.

1938 ..... Cocoa “hold-up” in Gold Coast, an example of rural protest.

1939–1945 ..... World War II. Hundreds of thousands of Africans serve overseas on the Allied side; in the aftermath, Britain and France, particularly, adopt more aggressive “developmentalist” colonial policies.

1941 ..... Allied forces expel Italians from Ethiopia.

1944 ..... ANC Youth League formed in South Africa, with Mandela a founder.

1948 ..... “Purified” Afrikaner National Party takes power in South Africa; officially imposes policy of apartheid.

c. late 1940s–1964 ..... High tide of “African nationalism”; within a few years either side of 1960, most colonies become independent under African rule—*except* for the settler colonies concentrated in Southern Africa.

c. early 1950s ..... “Defiance campaign” in South Africa by ANC and other organizations.

- c. early–mid-1950s ..... “Mau Mau” rebellion/emergency in Kenya.
- 1955 ..... Congress of the People in South Africa; Freedom Charter adopted.
- 1957 ..... Gold Coast wins independence from Britain, becomes the modern country of Ghana, the first sub-Saharan colony to gain independence.
- 1960 ..... South African security forces kill 69 unarmed protestors at Sharpeville; African nationalist organizations in the country are banned; they, in turn, adopt armed struggle.
- 1960–1961 ..... Independence of many countries, including the Belgian Congo; its first premier, Patrice Lumumba, is executed by rebels, and the country is engulfed in civil war.
- c. early 1960s ..... Armed liberation movements emerge in Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau.
- 1964 ..... Nelson Mandela and others sentenced to life imprisonment for treason in South Africa.
- 1965 ..... Military coup brings Joseph Mobutu to power in Congo-Kinshasa. He will rule for 32 years.
- 1965 ..... White settler regime in Southern Rhodesia proclaims Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain.
- 1966 ..... Coup in Ghana overthrows Kwame Nkrumah, the “Father of African Nationalism.”
- 1967 ..... Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere issues the Arusha Declaration, a blueprint for “African socialism.”
- 1967–1970 ..... Nigerian civil war; attempt by Biafra (southeastern Nigeria) to secede ultimately thwarted.
- 1972 ..... Beginning of sustained guerilla war in Rhodesia (formerly Southern Rhodesia).
- 1974 ..... Coup in Portugal leads to the end of Portuguese rule in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau; in the first two, however, civil war supported by outside powers continues.
- 1974 ..... Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie overthrown by radical military officers.
- c. mid-1970s ..... “Oil shocks”—price rises for petroleum—signal decline in terms of trade and deepening crisis in many parts of Africa.
- 1976 ..... Uprising in Soweto, a huge township outside Johannesburg, signals the arrival of a new, defiant generation in South Africa.
- c. early 1980s ..... AIDS identified; the disease almost certainly had already been spreading in Africa and will eventually have a significant impact.
- c. late 1980s and early 1990s ..... Wave of “democratization” sweeps over Africa, leading to the end of one-party and military regimes.
- 1990 ..... Mandela released from South African prison; negotiations for a democratic constitution begin.
- 1994 ..... Rwanda genocide leaves some 700,000 dead.
- 1994 ..... In South Africa’s first-ever democratic election, Nelson Mandela and the once-outlawed ANC sweep to victory.
- 2000 ..... Government-sponsored “invasions” of white-owned land begin in Zimbabwe. Crisis continues today.

2004 ..... Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Wangari Mathai, the Kenyan woman who has courageously campaigned for the environment and human rights.

2004 ..... Thabo Mbeki reelected South African president in the third peaceful and open election since the fall of apartheid.

## Glossary

**African National Congress (ANC):** The oldest of Africa’s “nationalist” organizations, founded in 1912 in South Africa. Became the main opposition movement to segregation and apartheid and was banned in 1960. Went into exile and pursued armed struggle, then was legalized in 1990 and, with Nelson Mandela at its head, took power in South Africa’s first free elections in 1994.

**Afrikaans:** The language, similar to Dutch but considered by linguists to be distinct, that developed after Dutch settlement in South Africa. Spoken mainly by Afrikaners and so-called “coloureds.”

**Afrikaner:** A white South African of predominantly Dutch descent.

**Age set (or age grade):** A social unit determined not by kinship but by gender and the timing of one’s birth. Thus, in a given community, males or females born within a few years of each other are part of the same male or female age set.

**Aksum (or Axum):** Ancient name for the state/kingdom later known as Ethiopia. Rulers converted to Coptic Christianity in the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century.

**Apartheid:** Afrikaans for “apartness,” apartheid became the official policy in South Africa when the National Party took power in 1948. It carried the notions of social and political separation to extremes, even declaring certain black “homelands” to be “independent” of South Africa. But as with segregation, the dependence on black labor meant that genuine and complete separation was not an objective.

**Asante (or Ashanti):** A major state straddling the forest and savanna zones of central modern-day Ghana. The king or *Asantehene* remains a powerful figure in Ghana, though the kingdom is obviously subsumed into a larger unit.

**Assimilation:** The French colonial policy that allowed for the possibility of Africans becoming “black Frenchmen.” Though often honored in the breach, it did result in Africans serving as parliamentary deputies in Paris, for instance.

**Atlantic System:** Refers to the complex linkages, arising during the era of mercantile capitalism, among the Americas, Europe, and Africa. Important features include the European colonization of the New World, the rise of plantation sugar production, and the Atlantic slave trade, which brought millions of Africans to the Americas.

**Australopithecus:** Literally, “southern ape,” a species appearing c. 3 to 4 million years ago in East and Southern Africa. Possibly the first in the hominid line of evolution, culminating in modern humans.

**Bantu:** Essentially a linguistic term, referring to a vast family of languages (actually a major subfamily of the even larger Niger-Congo category) spoken in central, eastern, and southern Africa. There are 400–500 distinct Bantu languages. The expansion of Bantu-speaking peoples is generally associated with the spread of ironworking and agriculture.

**Bantustans:** Originally the “reserves” (and comparable to American Indian reservations), Bantustans were the rural areas set aside for Africans, on a strictly “tribal” basis, in South Africa under segregation and apartheid. Eventually restyled as “homelands.”

**Biafra:** The state-to-be that attempted to break away from Nigeria in the late 1960s but failed. See **Igbo**.

**Boer:** Dutch for “farmer,” the term came to refer to predominantly Dutch-descended white settlers in South Africa. Eventually replaced for the most part by *Afrikaner*.

**“Bushmen”:** See **Khoisan**.

**Closed compound:** The institution that emerged first at the diamond fields of Kimberley but became the ubiquitous form of housing for migrant African workers all through Southern Africa. The laborers were housed in hostels within fenced complexes, fed en masse, and tightly controlled.

**Colonialism:** A subcategory of imperialism, colonialism represents the open, formal rule of one country by another. It is based, ultimately, on conquest (or preemptive surrender). It was colonialism, not simply foreign domination or imperialism, that befell most of Africa at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**“Coloured”:** A South African term, often misunderstood, especially by Americans, who might assume it is an old term for “blacks”; in South Africa, these were, and to some extent still are, separate categories. The descendants of

several populations contributed to make up the “coloureds”: indigenous Khoisan of the Cape region; imported slaves from the Indian Ocean rim; and to a lesser extent, Afrikaners. Often equated with “mixed race” but most of the “mixing” took place long ago, especially in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Coptic:** A branch of Christianity, distinct from Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Protestant, and others. Centered in Egypt and Ethiopia, where a particular strain developed.

**De Beers:** Cecil Rhodes’s diamond mining corporation, which achieved a virtual monopoly of the production and marketing of diamonds, first in South Africa and, later, worldwide.

**Developmentalist states:** After World War II, Britain and France undertook much more aggressive initiatives to develop their colonies socially, economically, and even politically, under the direction of the colonial state apparatus. Essentially, African nationalists inherited such states and certainly accepted the central state role in development, now, in theory, to benefit all “the people.”

**Ethnic group:** A form of identity; an answer to the question: Who are “my people”? Properly used, the word *tribe* in Africa would refer to an ethnic group. But ethnicity is not set in stone or rigidly bounded; it changes over time and overlaps with other identities. No single criterion always works to determine ethnicity or distinguish between ethnic groups, but the “best bets” in Africa would be language difference and geographical place of ancestral origin. Still, it is a matter of self-perception—and of being perceived.

**Female genital mutilation (FGM):** Female “circumcision,” actually covering a range of practices from excision of part or all of the clitoris to removal of most genital organs.

**Freetown:** The town in Sierra Leone that became the site where “recaptives”—would-be African slaves intercepted by British anti-slaving ships—were resettled. It became a site of cultural immersion in Western-style education and Christianity, and many of the recaptives returned to their original homes as African modernizers.

**Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO):** The main liberation movement that fought Portugal in Mozambique; led by Samora Machel.

**Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA):** An armed liberation group, based largely in the Kongo region of northern Angola, that emerged in the 1960s in Angola.

**Fulbe (or Fulani or Peul):** Largely pastoralist peoples spread over a wide east-to-west swath of the West African savanna and Sahel. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, they were often behind Islamic reform movements and *jihads*.

**Ghana:** Earliest major state in the West African savanna, c. 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. Linked to trade routes, involving especially gold and salt, across the Sahara Desert to the Mediterranean. The modern country of Ghana took its name from this kingdom, though in fact, today’s Ghana lies well to the southeast of the old one.

**Great Rift:** The major tectonic plate disturbance running right down the eastern side, the “spine” of Africa. It is geologically associated with East Africa’s Great Lakes region, with the Rift Valley of Kenya and Tanzania, and with major mountains, such as Kilimanjaro, Kenya, and the Mountains of the Moon.

**Great Trek:** The relatively sudden exodus of thousands of Afrikaners (Boers) out of the Cape Colony and into Southern Africa’s interior, where they founded two new republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. In many respects, it was a rebellion against British authority in the Cape Colony.

**Great Zimbabwe:** Usually refers to the greatest stone ruins in Africa south of the Nile region, located in the southwest of the modern country of Zimbabwe. These were ruins of a city, the capital of a kingdom with the same name.

**Hausa:** A very large ethnic group in the savanna belt of northern Nigeria. There were several major Hausa states; some of these were taken over by Fulbe Islamic reformers waging *jihad*, or holy war, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Homelands:** See *Bantustans*.

**Hominid:** The line of evolution culminating in modern humans; possibly includes *Australopithecus* and definitely includes *Homo habilis* and *Homo erectus*.

**Homo erectus:** A species of the hominid line, a direct ancestor of modern humans, appearing some 1.5 million years ago in Africa and spreading throughout Africa and, indeed, into much of the Old World.

**Hutu:** An ethnic group that constitutes the substantial majority population of both Rwanda and Burundi. Dominated to some degree for centuries by Tutsi, the domination was much sharpened by Belgian colonial rule, which openly favored Tutsi over Hutu. Hutu extremists launched the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of Tutsi (and moderate Hutu) deaths.

**Igbo:** The principal people of southeastern Nigeria. The Igbo took to Western-style education with alacrity during the colonial period. Resentment of Igbo domination of business and clerical positions all over Nigeria boiled over into pogroms against them in 1966. In response came an attempt to secede from Nigeria and found the new nation of Biafra, which touched off the Nigerian civil war of 1967–1970, ending with defeat of the secession effort.

**Illicit diamond buying (IDB):** A term used for illegal removal and sales of diamonds.

**Imperialism:** An emotive term subject to many interpretations, to say the least. Very broadly, it is the power and/or influence exerted by more powerful countries over less powerful ones. This definition permits a delineation of various kinds of imperialism—economic or cultural, for instance, as well as colonialism, the direct takeover of the less powerful place—as subcategories.

**Indirect Rule:** The British policy in colonial Africa of ruling “through the chiefs,” though in fact, all the empires made use of authority figures drawn from the subject population.

**Industrial capitalism:** Related, obviously, to the Industrial Revolution, beginning in Europe in the late 1700s. If the sailing ship was the symbol of mercantile capitalism, the factory and the railway serve as symbols of industrial capitalism.

**Interahamwe:** The Hutu “militias” that carried out much of the slaughter during the 1994 Rwanda genocide.

**Khoikhoi:** See **Khoisan**.

**Khoisan:** A term referring to the original indigenous peoples of Southern Africa who, for many thousands of years, lived primarily in small, mobile, hunting/gathering groups. Eventually, some of these took up the keeping of livestock and became known as Khoikhoi (or “Hottentots”). Those who still lived by hunting/gathering became known as San (or “Bushmen”).

**Kush:** A major kingdom—possibly the oldest state in Africa save for ancient Egypt—that emerged in the Nubian region of the Upper Nile. In some respects quite Egyptian in style, in others—such as its still-undeciphered script—quite distinct. At one stage, it occupied Egypt as the so-called Nubian or 25<sup>th</sup> dynasty.

**Mali:** The grandest of the West African savanna empires, c. 13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. The story of its founder, Sundiata, is the great epic of the region. A later king, or *mansa*, Kankan Musa, made a famous pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324–1325. This is the source of the name for the modern country of Mali.

**Matrilineal:** See **unilineal descent**.

**Mau Mau:** Insurgents in Kenya in the 1950s comprised mainly of the Kikuyu ethnic group who wished to rid Kenya of white settlers. They attacked not only white settlers but any Kikuyu they deemed to be collaborators.

**Mercantile capitalism:** Useful label for the era, c. 1500–1800, when European powers and firms sought profit and advantage from transporting commodities—including people defined as commodities, that is, slaves—from one part of the world to another for resale. The symbol of the age might well be the sailing ship. It has implications for history of imperialism and colonialism.

**Meroe:** City located at the confluence of the Nile and Atbara Rivers in Nubia, a later capital of the kingdom of Kush. Known as a center of iron production.

**Mfecane:** A Zulu word literally meaning “hammering” or “crushing,” it came to refer to the period, c. 1800–1840, of turbulent transformation of the southern Bantu world. Larger and more powerful kingdoms and armies and reconfiguration of the ethnic map through movements of conquerors and refugees resulted from it.

**Monoeconomy:** An economy based on export of one (or, perhaps, two or three) key commodities. Colonial rule in Africa tended to promote this kind of economy, which continues after independence. It generates considerable dependence on price and demand for the given product.

**Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA):** An armed liberation group, originally Marxist in orientation, that emerged in the 1960s in Angola.

**Nubia:** A region of the Upper Nile, corresponding with the southernmost parts of modern Egypt and northern parts of modern Sudan. Home to early and major African states and cities, such as Kush and Meroe.

**One-party state:** The alternative to competitive party systems that many African countries moved to in the 1960s–1980s. It was based, in theory, on consensus building, as in traditional villages, and made a reasonable stab at that in some cases but, in others, was simply a cloak for authoritarian rule and suppression of dissent.

**Pass laws:** Laws requiring that Africans carry booklets documenting their right to be and/or work in an urban area.

**Patrilineal:** See **unilineal descent**.

**Periplus:** A remarkable document from the first century A.D., written in Greek in the Roman Egyptian city of Alexandria. Essentially a guide to the Indian Ocean for Mediterranean and Red Sea trading ships. It shows quite clearly that “Azania”—the East African coast—was already connected commercially with areas to the north.

**Polygamy:** Refers to marriage involving more than one spouse, of either gender. *Polyandry*—one wife, more than one husband—is virtually unknown in Africa. But *polygyny*—one husband, more than one wife—has a long and wide history. It is declining but is still present, especially among older and/or rural populations.

**Recaptives:** See **Freetown**.

**Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF):** Military organization composed of Tutsi in exile, mainly in Uganda.

**Sahel:** Like *Swahili*, comes from the Arabic word for “shore,” though in this case, it refers to the southern “shore” of an ocean of sand—the Sahara Desert. A strip of semi-desert between the Sahara and the West African savanna.

**San:** See **Khoisan**.

**Savanna:** A major type of environment in western, eastern, and southern Africa. High in elevation, gently rolling to flattish, alternately wooded and grassed, with seasonal rainfall. It has probably been home to more people, and their history, than any other.

**Scramble for Africa:** The headlong pursuit of colonies in Africa by European powers, including Britain, France, and Germany, between about 1880 and 1905.

**Segregation:** Usually understood to mean racial separation in a context of white supremacy, and certainly there is much truth to this. Nonetheless, I suggest a somewhat more subtle understanding. Segregation as a system (and a word) appears at about the same time—the early 20<sup>th</sup> century—in South Africa and the U.S. South. Not simply a throwback or crude survival from a rural past, it can be

seen as a modernization of white supremacy in societies going through the transformations to urban, industrial life; societies actually becoming more *integrated* economically—though unequally. Dependence on black labor—especially in South Africa—meant actual, total separation was not in the cards.

**Settler/nonsettler colonies:** A simple distinction, but one with profound implications. Settler colonies saw a substantial number of people from the colonial mother country settling and intending for that settlement to be permanent. Nonsettler colonies were taken over and ruled by outsiders but did not see such settlement. In settler colonies, Africans were far more likely to lose their land, and struggles for independence were far more likely to become armed struggles.

**Shona:** The largest ethnic group in the modern nation of Zimbabwe, though there are several important subgroups. Ancestors of the Shona were responsible for Great Zimbabwe and a number of successor kingdoms.

**Songhai (or Songhay, Songrai):** Another of the major states of the West African Sudan, or savanna, c. 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. Its downfall came when the Moroccan army invaded—with firearms—in 1591.

**Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs):** Economic plans often adopted by African countries as the price of obtaining assistance from donor agencies, such as the World Bank or International Monetary Fund. SAPs typically involve fiscal belt-tightening (including cuts in social services), currency devaluation, and a lowering of tariff barriers.

**Sudan:** A modern African country in the continent’s northeast, but the broader meaning is a reference to the whole savanna belt stretching east-to-west across West Africa.

**Swahili:** Language and culture of the East African coast. Although the word comes from the Arabic for “shore,” Swahili is a Bantu language that became a *lingua franca* in the East African interior as well. Influence from Arabia is best seen in the predominance of Islam here.

**Syncretism:** The blending of cultural practices in realms ranging from medicine to music. Important especially in religion, where one can see indigenous African religious ideas or practices combined with Islam or Christianity.

**Terms of trade:** Essentially, the ratio in the value of what goes out (exports) versus what comes in (imports). If the ratio turns favorable, it can mean prosperity; the opposite turn can mean decline.

**Timbuktu (or Timbuctu, Timbuctoo):** The symbol of remoteness in the Western world, but a quite real—and, for a considerable time, quite important—city of the West African Sudan, on the great bend of the Niger River and at the edge of the desert. During the heydays of Mali and Songhai, it was a center of commerce but even more of Islamic learning, supporting scholars, libraries, and a thriving book trade.

**Tonga:** An ethnic group that straddles the border—which is the Zambezi River—between Zambia and Zimbabwe. (There are other, quite distinct Tonga peoples in Malawi and Mozambique.) A classic example of a “stateless” society in precolonial times. (Included here because the lecturer, having conducted considerable research in Tonga country, will draw illustrations from there.)

**“Tribe”:** Possibly the most misunderstood term about Africa in the Western world, as it often conjures up images of primitivism and savagery. In Africa, on the other hand, it is usually used in a more neutral way, to connote ethnic identity. See **ethnic group**.

**Tutsi:** A minority that constituted something of a precolonial aristocracy in Rwanda and Burundi and that was greatly favored during Belgian colonial rule. Postcolonial resentment of Tutsi exploded into the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, in which hundreds of thousands of Tutsi were killed. Tutsi-led exiles were nonetheless able to invade and take over the country, driving Hutu *génocidaires* into exile in turn.

**União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA):** An armed liberation group that emerged in the 1960s in Angola and was eventually supported by South Africa and the United States.

**Unilineal descent:** A system of determining membership in kinship groups—clans or lineages—by inheriting/passing on membership between generations. One inherits his/her membership from one parent only, and only one parent can pass on the group membership to his/her children. Thus in *patrilineal* systems, one inherits clan or lineage membership from one’s father, and only fathers can pass on membership to their children. In *matrilineal* systems, one inherits membership from one’s mother, and only mothers can pass it on.

**Witwatersrand:** Literally “white water ridge,” the 40-mile-long gold-bearing reef near modern Johannesburg, South Africa. Gold, even more than diamonds, was the foundation of the country’s development. Today, the “Rand” is a huge industrial megalopolis.

**Yoruba:** The main language and ethnic group of southwestern Nigeria. Organized into a number of separate and powerful kingdoms.

**Zulu:** Originally a small chiefdom in the Nguni region of South Africa, between the Drakensberg Mountains and the Indian Ocean. Especially under the rule of Shaka Zulu from 1818 to 1828, it became a much larger, more powerful nation, indeed legendary for its military prowess. Today, it is the largest single ethnic group in South Africa.

# **The African Experience: From “Lucy” to Mandela**

**Part II**

**Professor Kenneth P. Vickery**



**THE TEACHING COMPANY ®**

## **Kenneth P. Vickery, Ph.D.**

Alumni Distinguished Undergraduate Professor,  
North Carolina State University

Ken Vickery was born in Washington, D.C., and raised in Virginia and Mississippi. He received his B.A. degree with Phi Beta Kappa honors at Duke University in 1970. He went on to study sub-Saharan African history at Yale University under the late South African historian Leonard Thompson. His dissertation, a study of the political economy of southern Zambia in the colonial period, involved both archival and extensive oral-historical fieldwork. Yale awarded him the Ph.D. degree in 1978.

Professor Vickery joined the history faculty at North Carolina State University in 1977, where he continues to teach and serves as the department's Director of Undergraduate Advising. He has been a visiting professor on several occasions at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and at Meredith College. In 1993, he was awarded a Fulbright teaching fellowship and spent the entire year of 1994 as Fulbright Visiting Associate Professor in the Department of Economic History of the University of Zimbabwe in Harare.

Dr. Vickery was inducted into the Academy of Outstanding Teachers at NC State in 1986. In 2005, he was named Alumni Distinguished Undergraduate Professor, the university's highest teaching honor.

Professor Vickery has continued to conduct research during his 11 journeys to Africa. His book *Black and White in Southern Zambia: The Tonga Plateau Economy and British Imperialism, 1890–1939* (1986) was a finalist for the Herskovits Prize, given annually by the African Studies Association for the outstanding book in African studies in any discipline. He has published numerous articles and reviews in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *American Historical Review*, and other journals. In 2006, in honor of the anthropologist Elizabeth Colson, he edited and prepared a collection of 15 essays, *The Tonga-Speaking Peoples of Zambia and Zimbabwe*. Professor Vickery is also preparing a biography of Sir Roy Welensky, Prime Minister of the Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland (1956–1963), set in the context of Southern African labor history.

## Table of Contents

### The African Experience: From “Lucy” to Mandela

### Part II

<b>Professor Biography</b> .....	i
<b>Course Scope</b> .....	1
<b>Lecture Thirteen</b> .....	The Atlantic Slave Trade—The Scope.....
	3
<b>Lecture Fourteen</b> .....	The Atlantic Slave Trade—The Impact.....
	6
<b>Lecture Fifteen</b> .....	South Africa—The Dutch Cape Colony.....
	9
<b>Lecture Sixteen</b> .....	South Africa—The Zulu Kingdom.....
	12
<b>Lecture Seventeen</b> .....	South Africa—The Frontier and Unification.....
	16
<b>Lecture Eighteen</b> .....	South Africa—Diamonds and Gold.....
	18
<b>Lecture Nineteen</b> .....	Prelude to the “Scramble for Africa”.....
	21
<b>Lecture Twenty</b> .....	European Conquest and African Resistance.....
	23
<b>Lecture Twenty-One</b> .....	Colonial Africa—New Realities.....
	27
<b>Lecture Twenty-Two</b> .....	Colonial Africa—Comparisons and Change .....
	30
<b>Lecture Twenty-Three</b> .....	The Lion Awakens—The Rise of Nationalism.....
	32
<b>Lecture Twenty-Four</b> .....	The Peaceful Paths to Independence .....
	34
<b>Timeline</b> .....	Part I
<b>Glossary</b> .....	Part I
<b>Biographical Notes</b> .....	37
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	Part III

## The African Experience: From “Lucy” to Mandela

### Scope:

This course of 36 lectures is intended to provide a general introduction to Africa and its history. To many in the West, Africa has often seemed to be the Lost Continent—“lost” in two senses. The first would be *lost from view*: Many of us simply don’t hear much or know much about the place and its past. The second would be “lost” in the sense of *hopelessly lost*: What we do hear seems overwhelmingly negative, dominated by poverty, disease, disasters, violence, and tyranny. Our aim is certainly not to sugarcoat, explain away, or make excuses; there is enough reality behind these images to make doing so a genuine disservice. Our objective is to provide a fuller and more balanced view, a greater appreciation and understanding of the complexity of the African experience.

This course will focus primarily on Africa south of the Sahara Desert. This reflects the training, research interests, and teaching concentration of the instructor. Indeed, for related reasons, if there is a privileged subcontinent in the course’s coverage, it would be Southern Africa. The Republic of South Africa, in particular, features prominently, in part because it is by far the most developed and powerful country within our scope, but also because its history at many junctures yields fascinating comparisons with the history of the United States. Nonetheless, we will devote plenty of attention to themes and developments centered in West, Central, and East Africa. Although the sequence of lectures is essentially chronological and based on dynamics unfolding in the whole continent or in a major subregion, at several points, we will devote a lecture to a specific country, such as Ethiopia, the Congo, or Zimbabwe, in addition to South Africa.

History is often described as drama; if true, it is played out on a stage. Our original “stage” comprises the many natural environments of the African continent. Following an introductory lecture, we begin our course with descriptions of the basic ecological zones of Africa, then sample some of the more spectacular specific places, such as Mt. Kilimanjaro and the Victoria Falls (one of the seven natural wonders of the world). We continue by considering African history in the truly long run. This, after all, is the so-called “cradle of mankind,” and we examine not only the evidence concerning human origins but the transformation of human society from hunting and gathering to agriculture and the Iron Age. We analyze the emergence of essential social categories related to kinship, ethnic identity (what is a “tribe”? ), and politics—the groundwork for African states and kingdoms.

We pause in Lecture Seven to mark an exception to our sub-Saharan focus by looking briefly at ancient Egypt and its connections to Africa further south, upstream on the Nile.

Lecture Eight surveys the enduring importance of religion—indigenous, as well as Islam and Christianity—and the following lecture provides an overview of the ancient outpost of Christianity, the Ethiopian kingdom. We then encounter some recurring themes of the course—statebuilding and the connection with long-distance trade—by exploring the “golden age” in the West African savanna, the rise of the Swahili city-states on the east coast, and the massive ruins of Great Zimbabwe in the south.

Some 500 years ago, global history reached a turning point, symbolized rather well by Columbus’s voyage. In Africa as elsewhere, from this point forward, relations with Western powers become increasingly relevant. Over a span of six lectures, we illustrate this by investigating two absolutely critical developments: West Africa’s long, deep, and tragic involvement in the Atlantic slave trade and the origins of modern South Africa, beginning with the Cape Colony in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and culminating in the discoveries of diamonds and gold in the late 19<sup>th</sup>.

By that point, Africa’s encounter with Europe reaches another crucial juncture. Important as the slave trade and proto-South Africa were, most of Africa retained its independence and was not colonized until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Then, in a very short space of time, it was—in fact, virtually the entire continent was carved up and added to one or another European empire. We look at the reasons for this sudden imposition, African resistance, and the commonalities and differences in various colonial systems.

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, however, under intense pressure from African nationalists, the colonial edifice began to crumble nearly as fast as it had been built. But the paths to independence varied dramatically from colony to colony, especially between those that achieved decolonization peacefully and those where bloody liberation wars emerged. Nonetheless, with the final triumph of Nelson Mandela and his movement in South Africa, by the 1990s, colonialism and/or white minority rule were things of the past.

The drive to independence engendered great hopes and great expectations. After an initial period with genuine achievements, things began to turn sour—a bitter disappointment for so many. We analyze the factors—both internal and external—contributing to this downturn. We consider particularly appalling situations, to wit, the Rwanda genocide and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Yet we observe as well not only the South African “miracle” but also a revival of democratic spirit in many corners of Africa. We conclude with an assessment of Africa at the start of the millennium, mixing sobering reality with some reasons for hope, however cautious.

## Lecture Thirteen

### The Atlantic Slave Trade—The Scope

**Scope:** The most profound connection between America and Africa is, without doubt, the forced migration of large numbers of African slaves and their permanent settlement here. In this lecture, we go beyond the narrow Africa-United States linkage to examine West Africa's place in the whole immense *Atlantic System* that emerged in the three centuries following Columbus's epochal voyage. The system fatefully linked four continents, both hemispheres, the Old World and the New. Eventually, millions of Africans were dispatched in chains from West African ports running from Senegal to Angola, bound (literally) for Brazil, the Caribbean, and the United States. Why did Africa's role become that of a supply source for enslaved people? Did ideas about racial inferiority lead to enslavement of black Africans, or vice versa?

### Outline

- I. In 1992, the year marking the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Columbus's voyage, some people celebrated his accomplishment, and some decried it. But all had reason to observe it.
  - A. This is not because his feat was a "first"—it wasn't—but because it symbolizes the epoch-making changes that *followed* it.
  - B. These changes affected the entire globe but were particularly profound for the four continents bordering the Atlantic Ocean—Africa, Europe, and the Americas. An *Atlantic System* was being born, and an Atlantic slave trade, or AST, as it is often called, would be a central part of it.
- II. At a global level, we can speak as well of the onset of the age of mercantile capitalism.
  - A. Capitalism can be defined in many ways, but for now, let us emphasize that under capitalism, critical economic actors make critical decisions based on calculations of profit (often incorrect calculations, of course, but nonetheless determining actions).
  - B. In the age of *mercantile* capitalism, the "name of the game" was to go somewhere, obtain things, and transport them somewhere else—in the hope of generating profit.
  - C. Obviously, the precondition for all of this was a quantum leap in the ability to sail the oceans and transport things across them. It may be the stuff of grade-school social studies, but we cannot take the "maritime revolution" lightly. (Of course, Columbus symbolizes this advance as well.)
- III. Tastes were changing in Europe—and I mean *tastes* literally. It seems hard to believe that a desire for something sweet—sugar—could touch off processes that would utterly change—or end—the lives of millions of people.
  - A. Cane sugar, of course, is a tropical or subtropical crop, originally domesticated in New Guinea. In certain parts of the New World (the Western Hemisphere)—notably Brazil and the Caribbean islands—conditions were ideal for its production.
  - B. Other crops would eventually figure in the system of New World plantation slavery as well, especially coffee, tobacco, and cotton. It is worth observing that cotton has the most actual utility of these; the others are really luxuries, and some might call them drugs (tobacco certainly, coffee probably, sugar perhaps).
- IV. There was surely money to be made from New World sugar (and the other products). But cultivating it is a labor-intensive process. Where would the labor come from?
  - A. It is hardly surprising that the Western European colonizers of the New World—Spain, Portugal, England, France, and Holland—would eventually turn to slavery as the labor solution.
    1. After all, slavery—including chattel slavery, the most extreme form, in which people are legally defined as property—had a long history in the Old World, most recently in the Mediterranean.
    2. Many groups had been enslaved for many reasons and in many ways. Some—but by no means most—were Africans; it is revealing, perhaps, that the word *slave* itself comes from *Slav*, a reference to Slavs sold in the slave markets of the Black Sea.

B. But again, whether slave or free, who was going to constitute the workforce? It has become “natural” for many to assume that plantation laborers were “of course” enslaved black Africans. But that was not necessarily inevitable. Let us consider other possibilities.

1. As we do, a number of factors are relevant; let us highlight one—disease. Vulnerability to disease is heightened by a population’s lack of previous exposure (which generates resistance). Distance between a population and vectors of a disease—whether longitudinal (say, across the Atlantic) or latitudinal (say, between tropical and temperate zones)—can increase susceptibility.
2. What about Native Americans—“Indians”? They were largely unavailable, suffering a population catastrophe when exposed to Old World diseases, such as smallpox and measles. Also, being on their home ground made escape, the oldest and most common form of resistance to slavery, easier.
3. What about Europeans? In this case, the move from temperate to tropical conditions took a toll. They also could make legal and religious claims against enslavement; indentured servitude was only temporary, of course.
4. What, indeed, about Africans? Africa was part of the Old World; the Sahara was once not nearly the barrier it is today, and there was a long history of contact, providing some exposure to Old World diseases. And, of course, West and Central Africans went from one tropical zone to another. The “shock” of resettlement on strange ground made successful escape—for a while, at least—less likely.
5. All these options were tried; indeed, some experiments may surprise (some Europeans were enslaved, as were some Native Americans; the first Africans to Virginia in 1619 were indentured servants). But gradually, inexorably, the labor “answer” came to be enslaved Africans. The consequences, over centuries, were colossal.

V. But aren’t we begging a question here? Weren’t Europeans culturally predisposed to enslave Africans?

- A. I don’t like to straddle fences, but...yes and no. As for skin color, there were definitely negative associations with darkness—evil, uncleanliness, black magic, and so on. But there were also counterindications: positive associations with black (judge’s robes, graduates’ gowns) and negative with white (sickliness, death).
- B. If it was more culturally acceptable to enslave non-Christians, the Africans involved qualified, as did Native Americans.
- C. I would say it is a classic chicken-and-egg situation. Africans were somewhat more likely to be thought inferior, but as they were actually enslaved and became identified with slavery, belief in their inferiority deepened. Slavery and racism were mutually reinforcing.

VI. Thus, West and West/Central Africa came to play a crucial part in the Atlantic System as the provider of enslaved labor on which the wealth of the system depended.

- A. Millions (how many millions, we answer in the next lecture) endured the horror beyond horror: the middle passage. This was the largest forced migration in modern history.
- B. The making of the modern New World lies outside our scope, but consider this: Before 1800, four out of every five persons who crossed the Atlantic and settled in the Americas were Africans. They influenced countless aspects of American (in the larger sense) culture.

**Suggested Reading:**

Basil Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, parts 1–2.

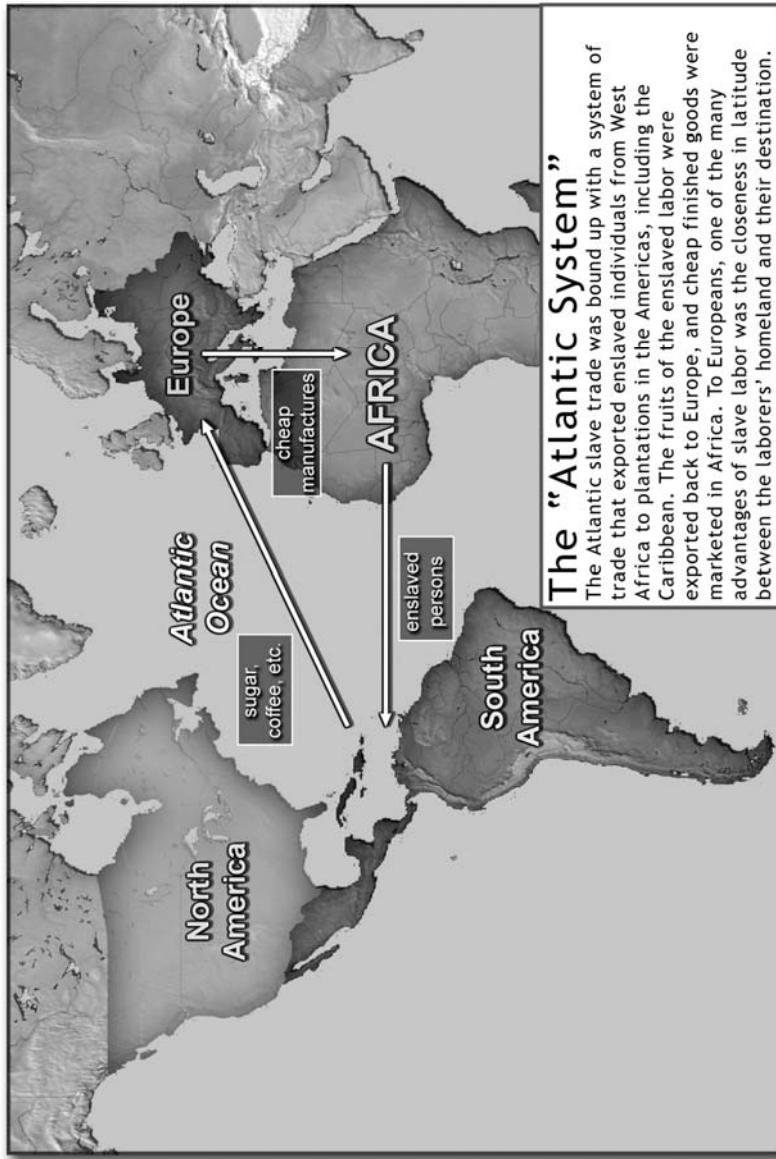
Erik Gilbert and Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*, chapter 8.

David Northrup, ed., *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, part I.

John Reader, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*, chapters 35–36.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How would you weigh cultural versus material (or economic) factors in the development of modern ideas of racial superiority/inferiority?
2. At the end of the day, was disease the critical factor in the emergence of West/Central Africa as the source of labor for the New World?



## Lecture Fourteen

### The Atlantic Slave Trade—The Impact

**Scope:** In this lecture, we bring our focus back squarely to Africa itself and consider the long-run impact of its involvement in the Atlantic System. We begin by looking at how the slave trade operated at the African end. How did slave ships obtain their “human cargo”? How did people wind up victims of such a destiny? Who gained and who lost? How many people are we talking about—including those who landed in the New World, those who died on the way, those who perished without ever embarking? How did this affect African population levels in the long term? We have looked before at the rise and fall of African kingdoms—how did statebuilding unfold in the slave-trade era? We often speak of “legacies” of slavery over here; what about over there? Did the slave trade warp social or political relationships or have a negative impact on Africa’s economic development?

### Outline

- I.** In the last lecture, we traced the ways in which Africa—specifically West and West/Central Africa—became critically important in the making of the “Atlantic world,” mainly through the mechanism of the Atlantic slave trade. This time, we want to narrow our focus.
  - A.** We will look at the way the slave trade worked on its African side.
  - B.** We will consider what the long-term impact of the Atlantic slave trade may have been.
- II.** Let’s start by attempting to approximate the sheer scale of the trade over the two to three centuries of its existence. Like almost everything else about the Atlantic slave trade, this question has been hotly contested by scholars and nonscholars alike.
  - A.** Although heavily biased estimates over the years have put the total number of Africans brought to the Americas as low as 2 million and as high as 600 million, we might start with Philip Curtin’s 1969 study, the most meticulous undertaken to that point, which suggested a figure of around 9 million. (Remember that 80 percent or more of the total went to Brazil and the Caribbean, only about 5 percent to the United States, and the balance to other destinations in the Western Hemisphere.)
  - B.** Curtin was attacked by such scholars as J. E. Inikori and Walter Rodney, who concluded that the total was at least 50 percent higher, perhaps 15 million.
  - C.** The most comprehensive study yet, the Harvard database released in 1999, suggests a figure of 11 million. It seems reasonable to estimate a total of 10 to 15 million persons, most of them aged 15 to 35 and in a two-to-one male/female ratio.
  - D.** Ironically, the peak century for the Atlantic slave trade was the 18<sup>th</sup>, the same as the age of Enlightenment in Europe.
  - E.** We must also remember that the numbers in question do not include those who died on the middle passage, variable but probably 10–20 percent.
  - F.** Nor do these numbers include those who were killed or injured in the process of obtaining slaves and getting them to West African ports. Some have suggested a “multiplier effect” as high as 5 to 1, the 1 representing those who actually landed in the New World. Even if it were 1 to 1, that would double the number of victims.
  - G.** It is clear, then, that Africa lost tens of millions of people—though, it is true, over a fairly long period and over a large area.
- III.** Before we look at how slaves were obtained, let us consider a question: Was slavery something brought from the outside, something previously unknown in Africa?
  - A.** No. But do not assume that *slavery* in Africa necessarily meant the same thing as the chattel slavery with which we are familiar in the Americas. There was, in fact, a wide range of what we might call forms of “unfree labor” in Africa—something some scholars call *limbry*—including royal slave retainers, domestic slavery, debt peonage, clientship, and so on.

B. In quite a number of these forms of labor, there was room for ending the slave status for oneself or one's children through absorption into a lineage, for example; the condition was not necessarily permanent or inheritable. There were also instances—some of them famous—of “upward mobility” into positions of power and prestige by persons originally of slave status.

**IV.** How did individual Africans come to suffer the horrid fate of becoming victims of the Atlantic slave trade? What preceded their forced embarkation from Goree Island in Senegal or Elmina Castle in Ghana, “doorways of no return”? To say the least, these are sensitive questions because they raise issues of responsibility and guilt.

A. Some slaves were captured directly by Europeans—as in the famous scene of the apprehension of Kunta Kinte in *Roots*, Alex Haley’s novelization of his African ancestry. Incidents like this certainly occurred but tended to come early in the Atlantic slave trade’s history and rarely later. Statistically, the numbers involved would be rather insignificant—African states were much too powerful to permit it.

B. The great majority of slaves were purchased by European slave traders from powerful African traders, most of whom were connected with political rulers—kings or chiefs. This, in turn, raises the question of how these brokers assembled their supplies of tradable slaves.

1. In some cases, the slaves were criminals, debtors, or political undesirables—dissidents or opponents of a ruler, perhaps. People were being *deported*, not just exported.
2. But the great majority were *captives*—the product of conflicts of various intensity—wars, battles, raids, and kidnappings. These incidents usually occurred between persons of different ethnic groups or political units.
3. In a sense, what the Atlantic slave trade did was to create an alternative fate for persons in these two categories. A criminal, who might otherwise face corporal punishment or exile, or a captive, who might have become a domestic “slave,” might now be sold to a European ship.

**V.** A comment: I have encountered Europeans or white Americans who seem to take satisfaction from the fact that most Africans brought involuntarily to the Americas were sold by Africans along the West African coast—as if this shifts the “blame” from European onto African shoulders.

A. For my money, there is plenty of responsibility—guilt, if you like—to go around, though I would note that the demand that ultimately drove the system came from Europeans and that it was not Europeans who were enslaved.

B. Now, for a more substantive point: The notion that “Africans sold their own people” assumes that the African sellers, and Africans generally, thought of themselves primarily as *Africans*. But they did not—they thought of themselves first as Asante, or Yoruba, or Kongo. A shared identity of “African-ness” developed only slowly—as is equally true of “European-ness” (as the long record of conflict between Europeans surely shows).

C. Some of the stories of the rulers who became caught up in the slave trade are wrenching, such as that of King Nzinga Mbemba of the Kongo, on the West/Central African coast, just south of the mouth of the Congo River.

1. The Portuguese came to the Kongo in 1490. King Nzinga, who came to the throne in about 1506, wished to seize the possibility of improving his own kingdom. He converted to Christianity, taking the name Afonso, and he corresponded with the Portuguese king.
2. At first, the Portuguese were interested in a civilizing mission, but gradually, they grew more and more interested in slave trading.
3. Afonso died disillusioned, knowing that his country was being depopulated by the Portuguese. In fact, his portion of what is now Angola was the hardest-hit region in terms of numbers of slaves extracted.

**VI.** We know what came *out* of Africa in the Atlantic slave trade: human beings, defined as property. What went *in*?

A. As we might expect, a whole variety of things: cloth, metal- and glassware from Europe, along with tobacco, alcohol, cowry shells, and spices from the Indian Ocean.

B. One commodity deserves special mention: guns, some 20 million of them in all. African rulers often insisted on guns for slaves.

**VII.** At the end of the day, then—or of the long night, if you like—how did Africa fare in the bargain? What was the impact of the Atlantic slave trade? These are not easy questions.

- A. It's possible to discern two broad schools of thought:
  - 1. One sees the Atlantic slave trade as thoroughly destructive, the largest single explanation for Africa's continuing impoverishment; Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* is a bold argument of this view.
  - 2. The other, associated with such scholars as John Fage and John Thornton, while hardly applauding the slave trade, is particularly concerned to portray Africans as historical agents rather than helpless victims.
- B. On balance, statebuilding in the slave trade zones was not inhibited and may have been accelerated; we have seen a correlation between the rise of states and vigorous trade, and like it or not, the slave trade was trade.
- C. Africa's population, unlike that of other continents, stagnated in the slave trade era. Whether this was the cause of, or the result of, economic stagnation continues to be debated.
  - 1. There seems no avoiding the fact that enslaved Africans, in their most productive years, produced wealth elsewhere, not in Africa.
  - 2. Rodney argues that in cold economic terms, exported people were *capital goods*—“goods” that produce other goods, while the things coming in were consumer goods or worse—destructive firearms.
- D. Finally, what of war and instability, fear and insecurity? Were the enslaved captives in wars that would have been fought anyway, or were they the bounty that *stimulated* the wars, increasingly fought with imported guns.
- E. Speaking personally, I find it hard *not* to conclude that this sorry chapter in human history inflicted lasting damage.

**Suggested Reading:**

Philip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*.

Basil Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, parts 3–4.

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Written by Himself*.

Erik Gilbert and Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*, chapter 9.

Joseph Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730–1830*.

David Northrup, ed., *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, parts II–IV.

John Reader, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*, chapters 37–39.

John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800*.

**Questions to Consider:**

- 1. Is the Atlantic slave trade a key to understanding Africa's underdevelopment, or must we look to other factors as more important?
- 2. Why do you think the moral and philosophical implications of selling or buying persons seem to have changed so? Is the question of whether they were or are “your own people” relevant?

## Lecture Fifteen

### South Africa—The Dutch Cape Colony

**Scope:** In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the Atlantic slave trade was picking up steam, Europeans came to the southwestern tip of Africa—the Cape of Good Hope—with different and, initially, quite limited objectives. The Dutch established a post at Cape Town simply to reprovision ships going around Africa, to and from their main commercial interests in South and East Asia. But Cape Town became something else entirely: a beachhead for the gradual expansion of permanent European—in other words, white—settlement. The local Khoisan peoples bore the brunt of this process, losing their land and livelihood. Meanwhile, rather than extracting slaves for the Atlantic trade, the Dutch *imported* slaves into the Cape, most of them not African at all. Descendants of these slaves and the Khoisan would eventually meld into South Africa’s *coloured* population—a distinct category from *black*. Finally, the Dutch lost the Cape Colony to Britain, and South Africa’s complexity deepened.

### Outline

- I. Our look at the Atlantic slave trade showed that in the modern era, West Africa’s history became inextricably bound up with that of the wider world and, especially, with Europe. This fact is true of the southern extreme of Africa as well, but the story played out very differently here.
- II. In our lecture on the Swahili world, we noted that by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the wealth of the Indian Ocean networks had begun to attract the attention of new “players” from Europe, the first being the Portuguese. Other European mercantile powers followed, including the Dutch, who particularly concern us here.
- III. By the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, Amsterdam was arguably the richest city on Earth, and the Dutch East India Company was the world’s most successful trading firm.
  - A. As its name suggests, the company’s principal interest was in the legendary wares, the silks and spices as it were, of the East—of Asia.
  - B. The company held a charter from the Dutch crown giving it the right to operate, in many respects, as a state unto itself. Already, it had pioneered the establishment of a Dutch colony in what became Indonesia.
  - C. In order to go to and from East Asia, the company ships constantly had to circumnavigate Africa. For some time, company commanders had paused at Table Bay to obtain fresh supplies of water and food.
- IV. In 1652, the company decided to establish a permanent post at Table Bay, originally with quite limited objectives: to streamline the reprovisioning of the company’s ships and to provide a resting spot for the ships’ crews.
- V. Let us pause here to take stock of southernmost Africa’s human geography at this point.
  - A. The original Khoisan hunter-gatherer population had been displaced by Bantu, Iron Age mixed farmers—but only in the eastern half of what became South Africa (east of the 20-inch rainfall line)—a long way from Table Bay.
  - B. In the western half, Khoisan peoples still predominated, but quite a number of Khoisan communities had adopted pastoralism, keeping sheep and cattle.
    1. The pastoralists are referred to as Khoikhoi (or “Hottentots”). Most of the groups in the vicinity and immediate hinterland of Table Bay were Khoikhoi pastoralists and, thus, the first to encounter the Dutch.
    2. Those who remained dependent on hunting and gathering can be referred to as San (or “Bushmen”).
- VI. Gradually, the company’s original, limited intention of creating an outpost at the edge of the sea and the land gave way to something very different: the establishment of a beachhead, from which, eventually, the European conquest of modern South Africa would proceed.
  - A. At first, before this change gathered momentum, Khoikhoi communities were reasonably happy to trade some of their livestock to the Dutch for the provisioning of ships and maintenance of the company’s settlement. But the balance in this initially mutually advantageous relationship shifted.

B. In 1657, the company released nine of its employees and granted them small farms not far from Table Bay.

1. This move was an absolutely crucial precedent: It was the start of permanent white settlement at the southern tip of Africa. More settlers followed (though the numbers were small compared with immigration to America, for instance).
2. Most of the land taken up by white settlers, of course, was seen by the Khoikhoi as their own. The pressure on the Khoikhoi's livestock also redoubled, both to provision the increasing number of ships calling at what was now Cape Town and to stock the settler's farms.
3. Some Khoikhoi resisted militarily, in three substantial wars and countless raids and counterraids carried out before the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. But the tide was turning against them.
4. As if this were not enough, the impact of disease—such as the smallpox epidemic of 1713—proved devastating to Khoisan populations.
5. By the later 1700s, the Khoikhoi or San who remained independent were those who were still outside the Cape Colony's reach (or had moved there). Those inside the Colony were largely reduced to a servile working class. They were not, however, legally enslaved.

C. Meanwhile, the company, beginning as early as 1658, sought to meet the Cape's growing labor needs in a way that seemed "natural" at the time: by importing slaves.

1. Most of these slaves, however, were not African at all. They came from various points around the Indian Ocean rim—Madagascar, southern India, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Many were Muslims.
2. Perhaps this should not surprise us. Slaveholding societies almost always bring in their slaves from elsewhere.

**VII.** The Cape Colony provides a perfect example of how ethnicity, ethnic identity, is fluid. Two ethnic groups were in essence "born" in the old Cape, and it is impossible to discuss modern South Africa without mentioning them.

- A. The "Cape Dutch" settlers, as they literally became landed in Southern Africa, came to be known as *Boers*—"farmers" in Dutch and in the Dutch-based language they spoke, Afrikaans. Eventually, they were known as *Afrikaners*—literally, and perhaps ironically, "Africans." Rather parallel to another group of Europeans who took their name from the place they settled, "Americans."
- B. Eventually, the descendants primarily of incorporated Khoisan and imported slaves came to be "lumped together" as South Africa's "coloured" population. Given that both the imported slave and Cape Dutch settler populations were disproportionately male, it is not surprising that there was a certain amount of "mixing" between these groups. It can nonetheless be misleading to define the "coloured" as "mixed race," which frequently occurs.

**VIII.** The Dutch eventually lost their colony at the Cape to the British around the year 1800. In 1820, the first British settlers arrived, and South Africa's endless complexity deepened.

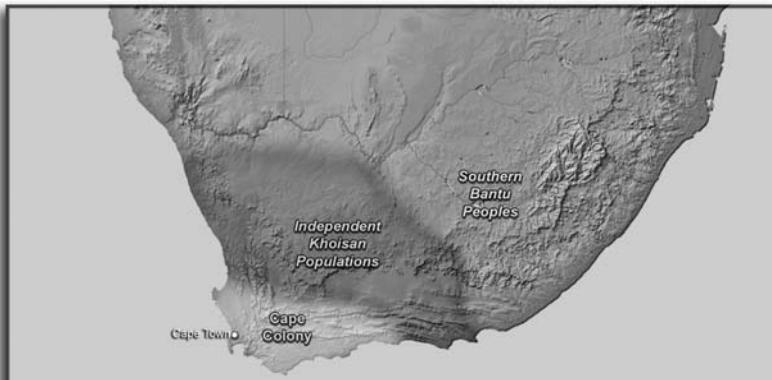
#### **Suggested Reading:**

Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee, eds., *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1840*.

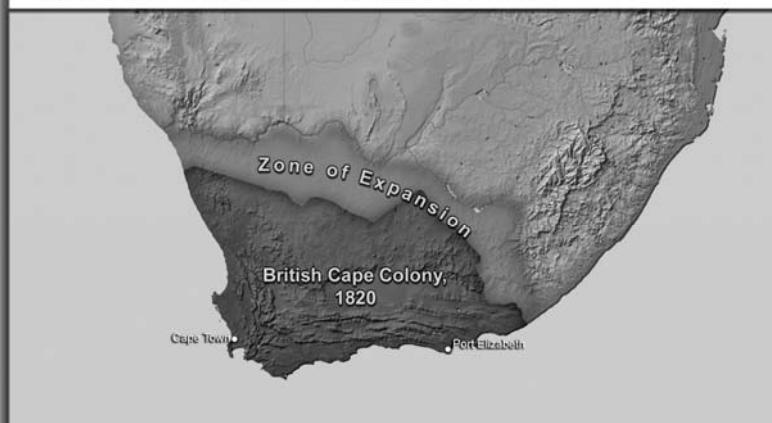
Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, chapter 2.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

1. What difference would it have made if the Dutch had first encountered, not Khoisan pastoralists and hunter/gatherers, but Iron Age Bantu agriculturalists—if the ideal protected harbor were located, say, in southeastern rather than southwestern South Africa?
2. Both the Cape Colony—the "germ" of modern South Africa—and the United States had histories of legal slavery and saw the emergence of a population called "colored." How would you compare the two cases?



**South Africa under the Dutch:** What began in 1652 as a provisioning post around Cape Town on the way to the East Indies had become a bona fide farming colony by the late 1700s. The Khoisan pastoralists, initially equal trading partners, lost use of their land and were either pushed north or forced into servile labor. The Dutch employed slave labor, but from around the Indian Ocean rim, rather than from Africa.



**South Africa under the British:** The Dutch lost the Cape Colony to the British around 1800, sowing the seeds of conflict between a new colonial government and the existing Dutch farmers who had become accustomed to a large degree of independence. The British eventually outlawed the slave trade as well as slavery itself in their imperial possessions. Meanwhile, the colony continued its expansion north and east.

## Lecture Sixteen

### South Africa—The Zulu Kingdom

**Scope:** Like Timbuktu, Zulu is one of the relatively few words that rings familiar to most Westerners. In this lecture, we begin to see why. For several decades in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the southern Bantu world underwent dramatic and, in some cases, traumatic change. Much larger, more centralized kingdoms replaced smaller chiefdoms. Individuals and whole communities were on the move, some in weakness as refugees, others in strength as conquerors. At the center of this process, the modern Zulu kingdom emerged under its founder, Shaka Zulu, one of the truly memorable figures in African history. We look at the ways in which Shaka, for all his later demonization as a bloodthirsty destroyer, was equally a builder and creator. The mythology surrounding him reverberates in South African culture and politics today.

### Outline

- I. We described in the last lecture a changing and expanding society, the Cape Colony. While that society's frontier was moving north and east, toward the southern Bantu world, the societies of *that* world were changing in dramatic fashion as well. In the next lecture, we take up the "collision" between the two. In this lecture, we want to examine the southern Bantu transformation, centered on the Zulu story.
- II. For nearly a half century, from the very late 18<sup>th</sup> century through the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup>, the peoples and communities of the southern Bantu world experienced revolutionary change, marked on one hand by disruption, upheaval, and turbulence and, on the other, by creativity and innovation.
  - A. For a long time, the whole process has been referred to as the *Mfecane*—Zulu for "hammering" or "crushing." Some have objected that this connotes only the negative, violent side. I agree, though no one has suggested a useful alternative; I will use it in quotation marks to recognize its "loaded" nature.
  - B. We can fast-forward for a moment and enumerate three main ways that the "Mfecane" process altered things—ways in which the southern Bantu world was different at the end of the day.
    - 1. We go from a large number of small-scale states—chiefdoms—to a smaller number of large-scale ones—kingdoms. Power was consolidated and expanded over larger territorial and population units.
    - 2. As elsewhere in the world, there is most definitely a military side to this consolidation. We might say that in the southern Bantu world the art and science of warfare became more serious and central concerns.
    - 3. The ethnic map of Southern Africa was remade. Ethnic identities expanded and contracted, and people moved—some as refugees, some as conquerors. Today, languages are heard in places removed hundreds of miles from their original homes.
- III. The story of Shaka and the founding of the modern Zulu kingdom illustrate all three dynamics. Shaka and those around him were part of the Nguni subdivision of the Bantu, who lived between the Drakensberg Mountains and the Indian Ocean.
  - A. Shaka's life story has provided endless fodder for psychohistorians, most of them amateur, and it's easy to see why. Both his adult personality and his childhood experiences were unusual—how were they linked?
    - 1. As an adult, he is reputed for his driving ambition, fierce determination, iron will, and in some accounts, his cruelty. He evidently never married nor had any recognized children.
    - 2. Shaka was born in 1787; his father, Senzangakona, was the chief of the Zulu, though *Zulu* at the time referred only to a small chiefdom of a few thousand. His mother was Nandi, a strong-willed woman from the neighboring Langeni community.
    - 3. If his parents were ever married at all, it did not last, and Shaka was raised by his mother, rejected by the Zulu royal house.
  - B. The world that Shaka grew up in was already beginning to change. Shaka had predecessors (and successors) who are also vital to the transformation.
    - 1. One of these predecessors, Dingiswayo, created a loose confederation of a number of northern Nguni chiefdoms, including that of Shaka's mother and the Zulu of Shaka's estranged father. Dingiswayo

also injected an element of military training into the initiation process of the *amabutho*, the age sets; in fact, these became the units of his army and can be styled age regiments.

- 2. Shaka first distinguished himself as a soldier and caught the eye of Dingiswayo, who elevated him to regiment commander.
- 3. In 1816, Shaka's father died; with Dingiswayo's patronage, he returned and seized the Zulu chieftainship. When Dingiswayo died in 1818, Shaka was well positioned to fill that vacuum as well.
- C. Shaka then entered his single decade of power (1818–1828). He took Dingiswayo's loose confederation and intensified both the consolidation of power around himself and the role of the military.
  - 1. Shaka's army used a new, shorter, stabbing iron spear and a much larger oval shield. They advanced into battle with tightly disciplined pincer movements. Shaka housed his regiments in separate stockaded towns, forbidding his soldiers to marry until 40.
  - 2. Certainly many died in the path of Shaka's army. But the enemy survivors were not massacred or enslaved, provided they accepted Shaka's authority. In fact, they were incorporated into the appropriate age regiments.
  - 3. Thus a process we might crudely term "Zulification" was underway; people who were not Zulu became Zulu to varying degrees. This process shows again the fluid nature of ethnic identity and is the key to the fact that "Zulu" is South Africa's largest single ethnic identity today.
  - 4. Thus, Shaka was a builder—of a new nation—as well as a destroyer and, for a time at least, both inspired and compelled loyalty.

IV. The military campaigns of Shaka and others—the Zulu was only one of several similar experiments—created the threat of insecurity over a wide region. How to respond to it? We have already noted those captured and incorporated.

- A. Some fled, in destitute and desperate condition, so desperate that a few are remembered for cannibalism—one of very rare instances.
- B. Others mobilized militarily and politically themselves.
  - 1. One such was Moshoeshoe, founder of the modern Sotho kingdom and a focus of our next lecture.
  - 2. And some took to the road, "states on the march." The Kololo wound up in far western Zambia—a thousand miles from their start—where their language is heard today. Several branches of Ngoni settled far to the north, in Malawi, Zambia, even Tanzania. And the Ndebele—founded by a mutinous lieutenant of Shaka's—created a Zulu-style kingdom in southwestern Zimbabwe; we shall meet them again.

V. Meanwhile, Shaka met his end.

- A. After his mother's death in 1827, he seemed to lose the acuity of judgment that had marked his reign. Always one to push, he may have pushed too hard and was assassinated on September 24, 1828, by a party of plotters, including his half-brother Dingane, who succeeded him.
- B. Shaka's legacy has always been significant. Was he a hero or a villain? Apartheid-era whites tended to paint him the bloodthirsty tyrant—just the sort of thing to expect without white rule. Others saw him as greatness itself and wrap themselves in his mantle.

VI. The turbulent change of the "Mfecane" has prompted questions: What started this ball rolling? What conditions invited the bold initiatives of Shaka and his peers?

- A. Some have argued that competition for control of trade—especially the ivory trade through Delagoa Bay—was an initial incentive to mobilize.
- B. A fascinating theory is that good years, which built up human and cattle populations, were followed by bad, which necessitated conflict over limited natural resources.
- C. Finally, we must mention the radical revisionism of Julian Cobbing, who holds that neither Shaka nor other Africans were responsible for the depredations of the day but, rather, Europeans of the northern Cape and Mozambique. Cobbing's work has not stood up well; the evidence for his chronology is weak. But have no doubt, the whites were coming; they are the subject of our next lecture.

**Suggested Reading:**

Erik Gilbert and Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*, pp. 226–229.

Carolyn Hamilton, ed., *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History*.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention*.

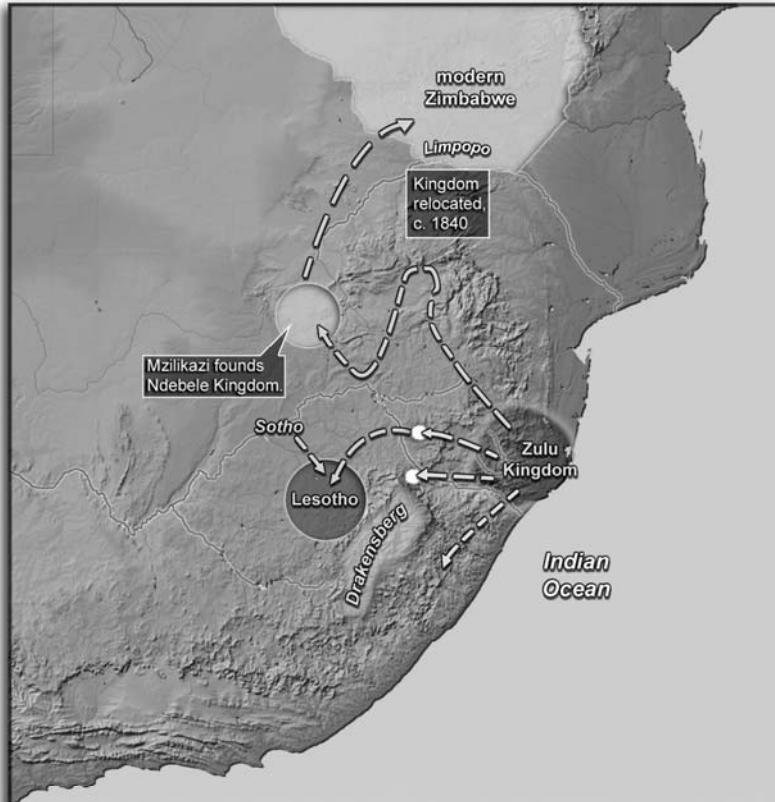
John Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Bantu Africa*.

Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, pp. 258–262.

Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, pp. 80–87.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What do you think touched off the turbulent changes in the southern Bantu world often referred to as the “Mfecane”?
2. Why do you think the image and legacy of Shaka Zulu continue to be such a lightning rod for controversy in South Africa today?



## Shaka and the "Mfecane" Process

Shaka held power for only a single decade (1818-1828) but the effects of the Zulu military expansion he inaugurated, when combined with the projects of other regional rulers, were long-lasting. Shaka effected innovations in Zulu military tactics, a "Zulufication" of conquered peoples, and in some cases new states emerged in reaction to his campaigns. The Sotho people coalesced into the kingdom of Lesotho under Moshoeshoe, and one of Shaka's generals founded the Ndebele kingdom that eventually located to SW Zimbabwe. Still other displaced peoples migrated even further to the north.

## Lecture Seventeen

### South Africa—The Frontier and Unification

**Scope:** By 1800, the southern Bantu peoples faced a new challenge: the expansion of European frontier pressure eastward. Again, the parallels with American history are striking—right down to the symbolism of the covered wagon. The white advance was a two-pronged one: As British rule and settlement expanded relentlessly, thousands of Afrikaners left British territory altogether in the Great Trek and established themselves in the far interior. Bantu peoples responded to frontier pressure in myriad ways but eventually found themselves desperately resisting white conquest, with the ultimate showdown coming, as we might expect, in a major war involving the Zulu. Finally, Britons and Boers turned on each other, and British victory in the bitter South African (or Boer) War paved the way for South Africa's unification.

### Outline

- I. Like America, South Africa has a long frontier history, shot through with controversies and contending mythologies.
  - A. In both countries, European settlers gradually spread over vast distances, confronting indigenous peoples. Some imagery—covered wagons, creaking over high plains into hostile territory—is eerily similar.
  - B. But in the end there emerged a huge difference: Although Europeans—whites—ultimately prevailed in both cases, in the United States, the Native Americans, or “Indians,” finally comprised only a tiny percentage of the total population. That was not remotely the case in South Africa, where indigenous Bantu peoples were—and remain—a large majority.
- II. Of course, South Africa’s frontier in one sense had begun in 1652. But in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the frontier—or frontiers—took on a quantum leap in intensity. Both principal sides added muscle.
  - A. The frontier was now heading out of Khoisan-dominated western South Africa and toward the Bantu-dominated east.
    - 1. Bantu societies—Iron Age, mixed agriculturalists—had far greater populations and were far more settled than Khoisan ones.
    - 2. As we saw in the previous lecture, in many respects, Bantu military capability had been revolutionized by Shaka and his contemporaries.
  - B. The Cape Colony—the principal “beachhead”—was now a British possession. This fact had two main consequences for the frontier:
    - 1. Britain was emerging as the most powerful nation in the world. The weight of the British Empire and increasing British settlement was now behind the expanding boundaries of the Cape, and in fact, a second beachhead was added with the British colony of Natal in 1843.
    - 2. British rule in the Cape, with its more effective administration and taxation and with its interference in the Cape’s racial order—the abolition of slavery in the 1830s, for example—provoked a rebellion-by-exit on the part of thousands of Cape Afrikaners. The Great Trek, as it came to be known, amounted to a sudden acceleration in the European frontier thrust, right into the South African interior.
- III. We are used to thinking of frontiers as lines, but a more useful concept might be that of frontier *zones*.
  - A. A frontier zone “opens” when there develops sustained contact between two or more parties or sides. It “closes” when one side achieves hegemony over the space in question.
  - B. During the open phase, relations between the sides are marked by ambiguity, ambivalence, uncertainty, shifting and sometimes surprising alliances (strange bedfellows), and mutual suspicion. Participants lack the benefit of hindsight, and it is unclear how things will “turn out.”
  - C. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, zone after zone was opened, involving various Bantu peoples—Sotho, Tswana, Zulu, Venda, and others. Eventually, all were closed by either Afrikaner or British power. In the Afrikaner case, this resulted in two independent Afrikaner states in the interior—the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.
- IV. An excellent example of an African statesman living through the pressures of the open—and closing—frontier is Moshoeshoe, founder of the modern kingdom of Lesotho. (See map at the end of Lecture Sixteen.)

- A. Moshoeshoe was born the same year as Shaka, 1787, across the Drakensberg Mountains on the high interior plateau.
- B. He enjoyed a far more “normal” childhood than Shaka and a much longer life—he died in 1870. Because of this longevity, unlike Shaka, he had to face the direct advance of both the Afrikaner and British frontiers.
- C. Even in his early years, Moshoeshoe, facing the insecurities and threats arising from the “Mfecane,” had shown a preference for diplomacy over warfare, though he was skilled in both. And he utilized both, over a period of decades, in seeking to save his kingdom from external conquest.
- D. By the end of his life, however, with his domain whittled down by half, Moshoeshoe could see how events were progressing and swallowed a bitter pill. Choosing what he saw as the lesser of two evils, he agreed to a treaty creating a British “protectorate” over Lesotho.
- E. It was this move that created a special relationship with the British crown and prevented Lesotho from being incorporated into modern South Africa (this explains the curiosity of one country being completely surrounded by another).
  - 1. Moshoeshoe’s successor’s retained a greater measure of day-to-day power, and the country avoided the worst impositions of South Africa’s segregation and apartheid.
  - 2. Economically, on the other hand, the Sotho people largely met the same fate as others in South—and Southern—Africa: lives dominated by labor migration.

V. As everyone likely knew, the premier obstacle to the completion of white conquest in South Africa was the continued independence of the Zulu kingdom.

- A. Cetshwayo, the third Zulu king after Shaka, took the throne in 1872 and faced Afrikaner pressure from Transvaal and British pressure from Natal. Rather like Moshoeshoe but not so successfully, he allied for a time with Natal.
- B. Theophilus Shepstone, Natal’s secretary of native affairs, turned on Cetshwayo in 1878, resulting in a British ultimatum demanding total Zulu disarmament within 30 days. Cetshwayo responded by mobilizing his army.
- C. The British invaded Zululand in January 1879 and quickly suffered their most disastrous defeat since the Crimea. But the tide was soon turned by the latest weaponry, and the Zulu capital was sacked. It was this campaign, and the admiration that even the British developed for the astonishing courage of Zulu soldiers, that catapulted the word *Zulu* into the Western lexicon.

VI. By the 1890s, with the power of African states finally broken, the British and Afrikaners turned on each other.

- A. The stakes were now infinitely higher, as we shall see in our next lecture: Diamonds and gold made overall control in South Africa a considerable prize.
- B. After a vicious war between 1899 and 1902, which witnessed, among other things, the invention of the concentration camp by the British, the Afrikaner republics surrendered.
- C. The way was now clear for the final unification of South Africa, which was born as an essentially settler-governed part of the British Empire in 1910.

**Suggested Reading:**

Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People*.

Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War*.

Jeffrey Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856–7*.

Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, chapters 3–4.

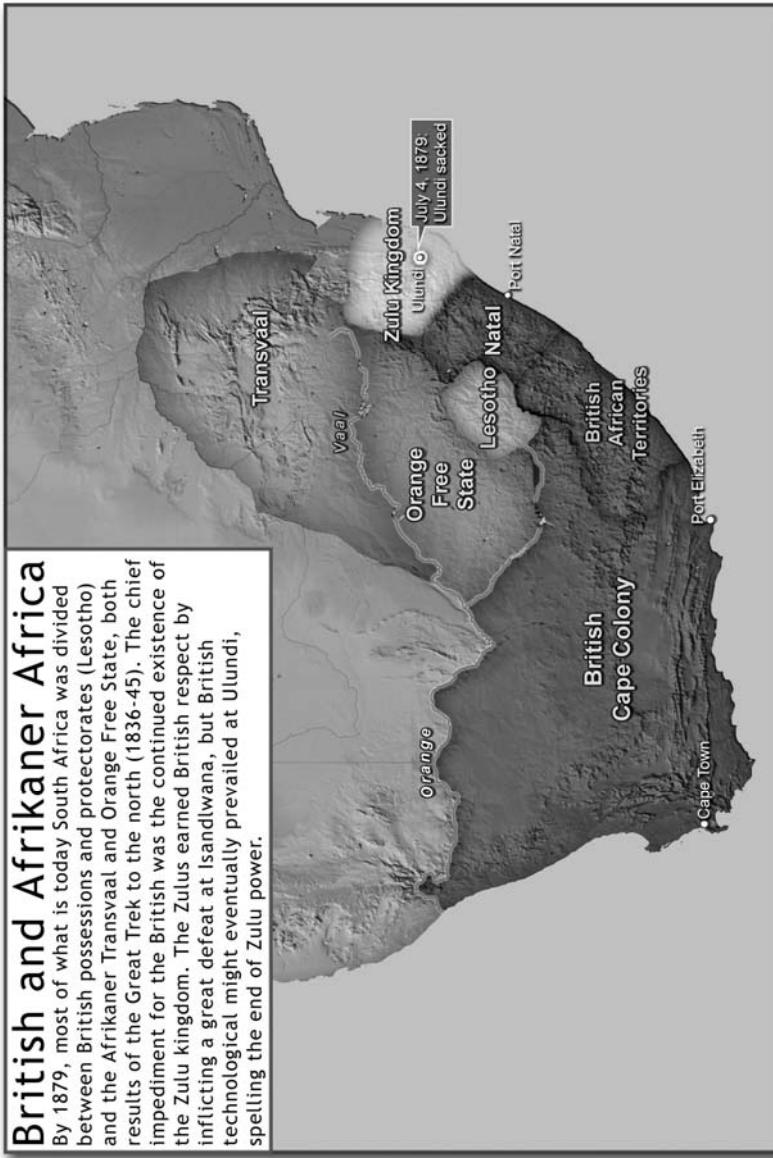
Leonard Thompson, *Survival in Two Worlds: Moshoeshoe of Lesotho, 1786–1870*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How would you compare the lives and careers of two giants of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Southern Africa—Shaka and Moshoeshoe?
2. Do you think the British and Boers would have fought had diamonds and gold not been discovered in the South African interior?

## British and Afrikaner Africa

By 1879, most of what is today South Africa was divided between British possessions and protectorates (Lesotho) and the Afrikaner Transvaal and Orange Free State, both results of the Great Trek to the north (1836-45). The chief impediment for the British was the continued existence of the Zulu kingdom. The Zulus earned British respect by inflicting a great defeat at Isandlwana, but British technological might eventually prevailed at Ulundi, spelling the end of Zulu power.



## Lecture Eighteen

### South Africa—Diamonds and Gold

**Scope:** In 1867, on a dusty plain deep in the *highveld* interior of what would become South Africa, a wandering hawker was given a stone that had caught his eye. It turned out, of course, to be a diamond, the first of millions to come out of the world's largest deposits. Twenty years later, near the site of today's Johannesburg, deposits of gold were found that came to dwarf in value even those of diamonds. Such enormous wealth set South Africa on the path to what it remains today: a First-World and Third-World country wrapped up in one. An urban dynamic became the country's driving force. Yet rural villages and families all through Southern Africa were linked to it, through the omnipresent system of back-and-forth migrant labor. The Mineral Revolution modernized racial domination in a system that came to be called *segregation*.

### Outline

- I. Within a 20-year period, two dramatic discoveries took place in the heart of what is now South Africa
  - A. The discovery of the world's largest deposits of diamonds in 1867 was followed by the discovery of the world's largest deposits of gold in 1886.
  - B. These events set in motion a Mineral Revolution that constitutes the last great "piece of the puzzle" creating 20<sup>th</sup>-century South Africa. These discoveries eventually affected virtually every household in the whole Southern African region in the last century.
- II. The key to understanding the significance of Kimberley (center of the diamond discoveries) is to see the transformation of a "diamond rush" into something very different—a modern, deep-level mining industry.
  - A. In a classic mineral rush—such as the gold rushes in California in 1849 or the Yukon in 1898—the word spreads fast, lots of people (mostly male) from all over flood into the rush area, there's lots of furious searching during the days and lots of drinking and fighting at night, a few people strike it rich, most don't, everybody leaves, and a ghost town is left behind.
  - B. Most of those events did indeed occur at Kimberley—except the last part, the exodus and the ghost town.
    - 1. Thousands of so-called "diggers" came to the region from around the world and around Southern Africa—including, for a time at least, a fair number of blacks.
    - 2. The diggers worked separate small claims—areas on the surface as small as 10 square yards, with the right to dig directly perpendicularly into the earth.
    - 3. The deeper they went, the greater were the difficulties and dangers they met—removal of dirt, cave-ins and collapses, flooding.
    - 4. Meanwhile, the value of diamonds fell as more of them were thrown on the market. Diamonds (and gold) are somewhat peculiar minerals because, compared to iron, copper, or oil, they actually have limited utility; this, in turn, may make markets especially sensitive to scarcity or the lack of it.
  - C. The solution, if a viable diamond industry was to survive, was to control the output of diamonds onto the market and to attract huge capital investment necessary to finance up-to-date mining technology and a large labor force. Diamonds were still there, but getting at them at deeper and deeper levels spelled the end of the digger with his pick, shovel, and bucket.
    - 1. The economic genius who engineered this transition was Cecil John Rhodes, an immigrant from England. His firm, De Beers, achieved a durable near-monopoly in world diamond distribution.
    - 2. Like Shaka, Rhodes had a short life (49 years) that left an indelible imprint on Southern Africa. His ambitions and achievements went far beyond business: He became prime minister of the Cape Colony and organized and financed the British conquest of two territories to the north named for him, Northern and Southern Rhodesia.
- III. Kimberley became the "cradle and testing ground" for certain practices and institutions with a lasting visibility in Southern Africa. Perhaps above all, it was the original home of the *closed compound*.
  - A. Because diamonds pack an enormous value into a very small piece, they have always been targets for what mine owners consider theft or illicit diamond buying (IDB).

- B. By keeping them housed and fed in an enclosed space with restricted access and egress, mine workers could be searched thoroughly after each shift.
- C. White miners had enough political clout to resist such enclosure. The compounds came to house only the black African workers (all of them male).
- D. Though originally constructed to control theft, the compounds offered Rhodes and other owners numerous additional advantages in labor discipline and control and in cost savings.
- E. The dichotomy of mine vis-à-vis African compound eventually would be reflected in the dichotomy of town vis-à-vis African township, still visible in virtually every South African urban area today.

IV. The diamond industry alone would have had a substantial impact on Southern African history. Take that impact and multiply it by a factor of, perhaps, 10, and you have some idea of what the gold mining industry has meant. It can rightly be said that gold built modern South Africa.

- A. Gold was the basis for the development of the gigantic Witwatersrand/ Johannesburg urban complex, the largest in sub-Saharan Africa. It underlay the investment in infrastructure and secondary industry. The urban industrial sector became the country's driving force.
- B. But South Africa's gold deposits, though enormous in total quantity, are poor in ore quality and difficult and expensive to extract. Without a huge, low-wage African workforce, South Africa's gold might have been left in the ground.

V. Eventually then, the Mineral Revolution's impact on peoples throughout Southern Africa was felt most directly in the creation of a low-wage, oscillating (back-and-forth, country-to-city) migrant labor system.

- A. But diamond and gold mining in South Africa, like mine work everywhere, is hot, dirty, unhealthy, and extremely dangerous. Especially at low wage levels, why would anyone go and do it? The answers are many and more complex than some might assume.
  1. There was a measure of direct compulsion early on, but in time, it disappeared, no longer necessary.
  2. Some migrants went quite voluntarily, to obtain the money for consumer goods (cultural tastes were changing) or to invest in farming equipment back home, or they were attracted by the "bright lights"—a vibrant urban culture was being born.
  3. Remember that the Mineral Revolution unfolded during precisely the same decades as the military/political conquest of all of Africa, including Southern Africa (see the following lectures). All the new regimes imposed taxation, and to pay it, one needed colonial currency.
  4. For some, for a time, it was possible to earn the money needed for taxes or wanted for new goods by selling produce from their rural farms. But as settler conquest meant loss of land and as population increased, this option narrowed. Others were too far from transport lines to get their products to market.
  5. Over time then, migration tended to become unavoidable rather than discretionary. Virtually every household in the whole region was touched by it. The development of the city was mirrored by the underdevelopment of the countryside.
- B. Increasing numbers of women made it to the city, but for several generations, most migrants were men, who returned periodically to their families in the rural areas. The burden, then, of maintaining rural households and raising the next generation fell overwhelmingly on rural women.

**Suggested Reading:**

Jonathan Crush, Alan Jeeves, and David Yudelman, *South Africa's Labor Empire: A History of Black Migrancy to the Gold Mines*.

C. W. De Kiewiet, *A History of South Africa, Social and Economic*, chapters IV, VII.

Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, chapter 4.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How did the special characteristics of diamonds and gold, in the forms found in South Africa, affect the course of the Mineral Revolution there?
2. Why and how did migrant labor become the virtually inescapable reality for millions of persons and families in Southern Africa?

## Lecture Nineteen

### Prelude to the “Scramble for Africa”

**Scope:** In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, between the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade and the onset of full-blown European colonization, we can observe a number of intriguing yet somewhat contradictory developments in Africa. In East Africa, slave trading did not decline at all; indeed, the Arab/Swahili networks pressed sharply into the interior in their efforts to get ivory and slaves to the Indian Ocean. In West Africa, on the other hand, there occurred what some have called a revolution in “legitimate commerce,” with palm oil and peanuts replacing the traffic in human beings. We examine the stories of fascinating African entrepreneurs in such people as Ja Ja of Opobo and the legendary Tippu Tip. The Fante Confederation offers a tantalizing possibility: modernization *without* colonization. In Europe, however, the maturing Industrial Revolution and religious evangelism, symbolized by David Livingstone and the phrase “Christianity and Commerce,” suggested that change was coming in the African/European relationship.

### Outline

- I. For the past several lectures, our focus has been firmly on Southern and, indeed, South Africa. Let us widen the lens again to examine the larger dimensions of Africa’s relations with the outside world in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century period between the ending of the Atlantic slave trade and the onset of outright European partitioning of the continent. The era raises some intriguing questions of the “what if...” kind, while ultimately indicating the direction the wind was blowing.
- II. Britain abolished the transoceanic slave trade in 1807 (and slavery itself in the British Empire, including the Cape Colony, in the 1830s, as we have seen). Most, though not all, Western nations followed suit.
  - A. Abolition of the slave trade certainly reflected humanitarian currents in the West related to the Enlightenment. It also corresponded, however, with the rise of industrial (as opposed to mercantile) capitalism, with its emphasis on, among other things, “free” (i.e., wage) labor.
  - B. The external demand for West African products shifted accordingly. The demand for enslaved human laborers fell and that for other commodities rose—for instance, for palm oil, used to lubricate the rapidly multiplying machines of the industrial age.
  - C. Britain put teeth into its slave trade prohibition; its navy intercepted slave ships of all nations off the West African coast. The human “cargo” of such ships was resettled at the interesting cultural experiment known as Freetown in Sierra Leone.
- III. Thus, the era of “legitimate commerce,” as the Europeans liked to call it, was born. To the demand for palm oil was added palm kernels (for soap), gum arabic (a dye fixer for the textile industry), and peanuts.
- IV. Some remarkable West African entrepreneurs arose to organize enterprises taking advantage of the new market realities.
  - A. A fascinating example was Ja Ja of Opobo in the Niger Delta of modern Nigeria. This area was known as the “oil rivers”—for palm oil, not the petroleum production that dominates the place today.
  - B. Ja Ja, a former slave himself who had risen to become a sort of merchant-king, achieved a monopoly of palm-oil supply to counter what he saw as a European monopoly of purchase and shipping.
  - C. As Basil Davidson has put it, Ja Ja “modernized in every way he could.” He persuaded one European shipper to break ranks and began to pursue the possibility of organizing and financing his own direct shipping to Europe.
  - D. Ja Ja’s end illustrates the way matters were developing. In the 1880s, he was essentially kidnapped in an episode of what can only be called British treachery and exiled to the West Indies, where he spent the last five years of his life.
- V. Ja Ja’s commercial initiatives were matched by equally interesting cultural and political experiments pursued by talented West Africans acting on their own during this interlude. They offer tantalizing hints of the possibility of modernization without colonization.

- A. At Freetown, the so-called “recaptives” brought there by the British Navy were immersed in something of a cultural bath. Many became Christian and literate.
  - 1. A substantial number of those at Freetown were Yoruba peoples from what is now southwestern Nigeria. And many of these subsequently returned to their original home, spreading the gospel of their new faith and a different gospel of modern education.
  - 2. Among the most prominent of these was Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who became the Anglican archbishop in the region. Crowther advocated an African-run regeneration of the Yoruba—and Africa. He enjoyed considerable success for a time, but his ultimate eclipse and replacement by a European is again suggestive of shifting winds in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- B. In the southern part of what is now Ghana, African clergy and schoolteachers associated with the Methodist Church promoted an effort between 1868 and 1873 to establish a confederation of the Fante peoples with a distinctively modern flavor. They drafted a constitution balancing the power of traditional chiefs with progressives like themselves and set up a rudimentary administration and military before the British essentially aborted the process with a local-level annexation of this part of southern Ghana.

**VI.** In East Africa, there was also a commercial renaissance, but it was not nearly so “legitimate.”

- A. Swahili and Arab/Swahili traders, long content to allow the products of the interior to be brought to them, adopted a much more aggressive posture.
- B. Several traders, such as Hamed bin Muhammed, whom Europeans knew as Tippu Tip, moved boldly to ally with African rulers of the interior and intensify the exploitation, not just of ivory, but also of humans as slaves. These slaves were bound for the growing plantations of the East African coast and Zanzibar or overseas to Arabia or Persia.
  - 1. It was in this period that KiSwahili became the *lingua franca* of much of the East African interior.
  - 2. Historian Roland Oliver, for one, speculates that had European power not reversed the fortunes of those such as Tippu Tip, a much larger sphere of East and Central Africa might be Islamic today.

**VII.** Meanwhile, the currents of change continued to churn in Europe. To the Industrial Revolution, with its commercial ramifications for Africa, we may add a resurgence in Christian evangelism.

- A. In some ways, a perfect symbol of all this was the enigmatic, prolific, and still impressive David Livingstone. The son of a Scottish factory worker, Livingstone’s exposure of the cruelties of the “Arab” slave trade, based on his prodigious explorations of southern/central/eastern Africa, provided a perfect moral cause for Britons. “Christianity and [legitimate] Commerce” became the catchphrase for the regeneration of Africa.
- B. David Livingstone was not necessarily in favor of European colonization. Yet his name is forever linked with that of Henry Stanley, a Briton of a very different stripe, who destroyed Tippu Tip in the name of King Leopold II of Belgium. A new era—the colonial era—was beginning.

**Suggested Reading:**

Basil Davidson, *The African Slave Trade*, pp. 257–265.

Tim Jeal, *Livingstone*.

Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, chapters 16–17, 20.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. If colonialism had not come to Africa, to what extent do you think Africa might have modernized on its own?
2. In what ways was David Livingstone a representative of the Victorian era and its relation to Africa?

## Lecture Twenty

### European Conquest and African Resistance

**Scope:** “When I left the Foreign Office in 1880, nobody thought of Africa. When I returned to it in 1885, the nations of Europe were almost quarrelling with each other about the various portions of it which they could obtain.” The speaker was Lord Salisbury, British prime minister and foreign minister for most of the period from 1878 to 1902; he was commenting on the remarkable speed with which European powers geared up to colonize virtually the entire African continent at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Of course, *decolonization*, when it came three generations later, proceeded just as quickly.) In this lecture, we conclude our consideration of the factors that culminated in the rapid partition of Africa by European empires, including the search for raw materials and markets, the missionary impulse, pseudo-scientific racism, and new military technology. We also examine two dramatic—though ultimately futile—examples of African kings’ resistance: Samori Ture versus the French on the West African savanna and Lobengula versus Rhodes and the British in modern-day Zimbabwe.

### Outline

- I. In late 1884, a rather amazing event (or was it?) began in Berlin: Representatives of a number of Western powers started discussing the “ground rules” for the foreign occupation of Africa. Not an African was present. Not surprisingly, the Berlin Conference is often seen as the “starting gun” of the “scramble for Africa” and, thus, the colonial period.
- II. This may be a good time to sharpen our terminology. *Imperialism* and *colonialism* are highly emotive words (for good reason), often used interchangeably.
  - A. I will suggest that we use *imperialism* to refer to the power or influence exerted by more powerful nations over less powerful ones. Admittedly, this definition is very broad indeed; we can imagine a range from rather mild forms of cultural imperialism, to economic imperialism, to behind-the-scenes control (puppet governments and so on), to outright, direct takeover.
  - B. It is this direct, formal takeover, based in the last analysis on conquest, that I consider to be *colonialism*—the real or implied conquest of one country over another. And it is colonialism that befell virtually every bit of Africa in the space of a generation straddling the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup>. Before this colonial period—or after it—we may speak of outside imperialism in Africa but rarely colonialism (with important exceptions, such as the Cape Colony).
- III. For major actions to occur in life, the protagonist must possess both the *motivation* and the *capability* to carry the action out (and currently or subsequently, it is usually *justified*—or rationalized—in the protagonist’s mind). What factors gave Western European powers—after centuries of contact with Africa—the motivation, capability, and rationalization to partition the continent and add the portions to their empires?
  - A. The Industrial Revolution was in full swing in Europe (and America) at this time. If the factory was the symbol of the age, there was a significant perceived need to pursue new sources of raw materials for these factories and new markets for their output.
  - B. As we have seen, an evangelical revival was underway in Europe. “Saving the heathen” provided both motivation and justification for going into Africa—by force, if necessary, in some minds.
  - C. A rather less charitable development was what we might call *pseudo-scientific racism*. From Social Darwinism, it was a short leap to the conclusion that Europeans, apparently so powerful, had a destiny to dominate the lesser “races,” above all, the Africans.
  - D. Finally, the astonishing technology of the Industrial Age had its military applications, too—and the development of new weaponry, such as the Maxim gun, finally gave Europe the decisive military advantage over African resistors.
- IV. Of course, all this might not necessarily equal outright colonization had there not been multiple industrial capitalist powers. But the dynamic of “getting there first” and, thus, establishing *secure* sources of markets and raw materials, besides adding to the grandeur of empire, lent the “scramble” a self-propelling momentum.

V. We know enough by now to recognize that Africans—African peoples, African states, and African leaders—did not react passively to these developments.

- A. First of all, it is important to observe that resistance to colonial occupation—physical, military resistance—was widespread across the entire continent. The fact that it was futile in the shorter run does not necessarily mean it was not significant as inspiration to later generations.
- B. Having said that, it is wrong to divide up African rulers or peoples between “heroic resistors” versus “cowardly capitulators”—or collaborators. The situation was far more complex than that, and nobody had the benefit of hindsight to know that this occupation would be relatively lasting. Some allied with Europeans to gain advantage over an old rival or concluded, as Moshoeshoe had, that further resistance was indeed a dead end.

VI. Let us now focus on two real people, real kings, as they faced the new realities in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century—one from West Africa, one from Southern Africa.

- A. In Lecture Ten, we saw that the savanna belt of West Africa—the Sudan—has long been a site for classic state and empire building. The late 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries saw new variations on the theme, and a number of strong new states—some built on the energy of Islamic revivalism—emerged.
  - 1. One of the new empires appeared in the 1870s under the leadership of Samori Ture, a member of the *juula* (Muslim merchant class) but better known for his extraordinary statebuilding and military skills.
  - 2. As the French expanded eastward from their base in Senegal, Samori actually re-created his empire several hundred miles to the east and left the French a scorched earth to occupy. By this time, he was tapping sources in British Sierra Leone to obtain repeating rifles.
  - 3. He tried to create an alliance against the French with Amadou Sékou, the son of a prophet figure who had established an empire further west, but Sékou refused to accept an alliance with an adventurer.
  - 4. Eventually, the French caught up to Samori and met a fierce resistance that more than earned their respect. But the game was up; Samori was captured in 1898 and exiled to Gabon, where he died two years later. He is considered a national hero in no less than three modern West African countries.
- B. In Lecture Sixteen, we saw that the “Mfecane” process resulted in a remaking of the Southern African ethnic map and the creation of powerful new kingdoms. One of these was the Ndebele, founded by one of Shaka’s lieutenants who split from him and led his followers into modern Zimbabwe.
  - 1. And there, of course, Rhodes eventually caught up with the Ndebele. The fate of the second, and last, Ndebele king, Lobengula, is a good illustration of the declining options available to African leaders of the time.
  - 2. Lobengula sought, with limited success, to play Afrikaners off against the British. In 1888, he signed a treaty with Rhodes’s representatives, hoping that a limited mining concession would buy off the advancing European pressure.
  - 3. It was not to be. Badly misled on the terms of his agreement, Lobengula repudiated it directly to Queen Victoria. But by 1893, Rhodes’s force invaded the Ndebele kingdom, and Lobengula died on the run.
  - 4. Three years later, a major uprising broke out against Rhodes’s occupation, remembered by Zimbabweans as the first *Chimurenga* (“struggle”). But it was put down after 18 months, and Southern Rhodesia was secure.

**Suggested Reading:**

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*.

Erik Gilbert and Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*, chapter 13.

Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*.

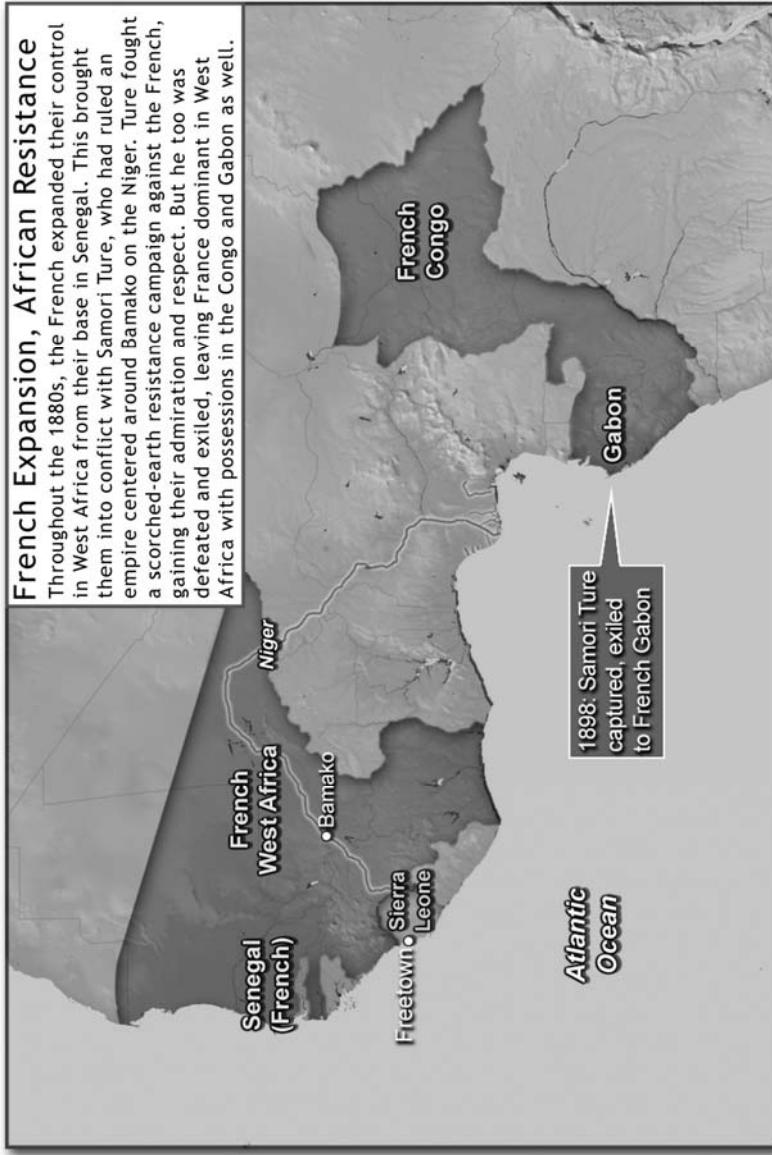
Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, chapters 21–22.

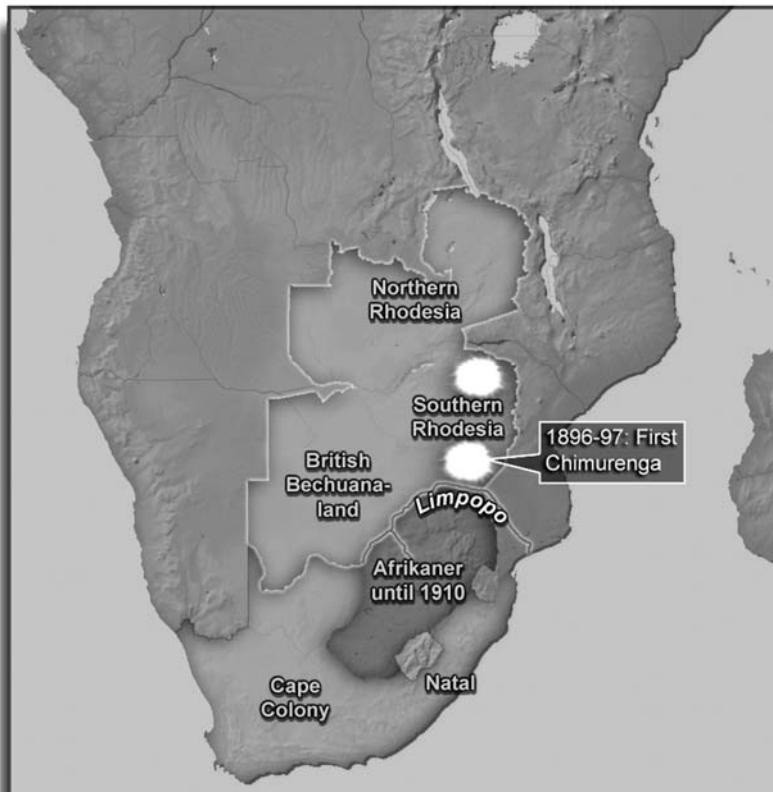
**Questions to Consider:**

1. Of the various factors—cultural, economic, political, and technological—leading to the “scramble for Africa,” which do you think was most decisive?
2. If you were leading a community threatened with imperial advance, how would you respond? What would be your alternatives, and how would you weigh them?

### French Expansion, African Resistance

Throughout the 1880s, the French expanded their control in West Africa from their base in Senegal. This brought them into conflict with Samori Ture, who had ruled an empire centered around Bamako on the Niger. Ture fought a scorched-earth resistance campaign against the French, gaining their admiration and respect. But he too was defeated and exiled, leaving France dominant in West Africa with possessions in the Congo and Gabon as well.





### British Dominance, African Resistance

By 1893, Cecil Rhodes's forces had conquered the Ndebele kingdom of Lobengula that had occupied the western portions of Southern Rhodesia. So Britain was very well placed in Southern Africa, controlling all of South Africa except the Afrikaner portions, as well as the three territories (Bechuanaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesia) of the British South Africa Company, a company chartered by Britain and managed by Rhodes. The first uprising against British rule, the First Chimurenga, was put down, but it served as an inspiration for later resistance.

## Lecture Twenty-One

### Colonial Africa—New Realities

**Scope:** By the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, practically all of Africa was under European colonial rule. Although five different empires were represented, each with its own particular style, African colonies shared some fundamental characteristics. All the colonial powers sought economic gain from their possessions, usually by facilitating export of raw materials (minerals or crops), while selling manufactured goods to colonial subjects. New infrastructure—notably railroads—invariably connected ports to wealth-producing spots in the interior. All the colonies, not surprisingly, were run on thoroughly authoritarian (and sometimes brutal) lines and created hierarchies based on notions of European racial and cultural superiority. Yet all found it necessary to depend in part on certain figures—headmen, chiefs, even kings—drawn from the subject population. And all invoked the rhetoric, at least, of a “civilizing mission” that could result in important changes for Africans—above all, perhaps, in education.

### Outline

- I. By 1910 or so, all of Africa, save Ethiopia and Liberia, belonged to one or another European empire—French, British, Portuguese, Belgian, or German. Colonial Africa was a reality; what difference would this make? Although colonies surely varied one from another and changed over time, they shared some fundamental characteristics that we outline in this lecture.
- II. All the colonial powers, naturally enough, sought economic gain from their new possessions.
  - A. They did so primarily by pursuing a far more thoroughgoing exploitation of Africa’s raw material products—mineral and cash crops—than had been possible previously.
    - 1. Colonies tended to become *monoconomies*, specializing in the increased production, for export, of a single commodity (or, perhaps, two or three).
    - 2. Thus did Senegal become synonymous with peanuts, the Ivory Coast and the Gold Coast (Ghana) with cocoa, Kenya with tea and coffee, Uganda with cotton, the Belgian Congo with rubber and copper, Northern Rhodesia with copper, and so forth.
    - 3. To move these products from the points of production to ocean ports, whence to be exported, required transport infrastructure. Indeed, the most lasting genuine investment made by the colonial powers in Africa consisted of the railway lines constructed in the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
    - 4. These railway lines illustrate how Africa’s economies, more than ever before, were “turned outward.” The connection between the commodity-production zone and the wider world, through the nexus of the port, was emphasized; lateral connections within Africa tended to atrophy.
    - 5. Colonial development, then, tended to be highly concentrated around export-producing zones and infrastructure; regions outside of these languished.
    - 6. All of this, obviously, required African labor, whether this meant African farmers producing peanuts or cocoa on their own land or Africans working for wages on mines and plantations (or to construct railways and roads).
    - 7. The degree and longevity of direct compulsion used to obtain this labor may be surprising; it turns out that forced labor has a long history. Otherwise, taxation indirectly produced a need to earn colonial currency. But many worked quite voluntarily in order to obtain a range of newly desired goods, to invest in their children’s education, and so forth.
  - B. The previous sentence suggests the other side of the economic coin: It was hoped that as the colonies “developed,” they would provide markets for the manufactures of the metropole.
- III. Politically, of course, the African colonies were conquered territories and were administered as such, by means authoritarian, at the least, and brutal, at the most.
  - A. The lines of command ran, in theory, from the metropolitan capital to the white colonial governor to the white “district officers” presiding over territorial units.
  - B. In practice, a considerable amount of discretion was left to the “man on the spot,” the governors and local district officers. The bottom-line objectives were to maintain order, keep the exports flowing, and collect the tax; how these goals were achieved was secondary.

- C. The security forces—police and military—were clearly the final guarantors of order. Though commanded by Europeans, the policemen, soldiers, or noncommissioned officers (NCOs) were usually Africans, often from ethnic groups thought to be “cut out” for such work.
- D. It was at the level just below the district officer that things got interesting. Remember that practically every colony incorporated numerous ethnic groups and a panoply of previously independent rulers.
  - 1. Although we might think that African political structures were smashed in the process of conquest, that often—perhaps usually—was not really the case. Kings, chiefs, and headmen were still around, as were pretenders, sometimes, to their titles.
  - 2. Virtually all empires found it necessary to make use of authority figures drawn from the subject populations. African empires were no exception; for reasons of numbers alone (relatively few Europeans actually ran the colonies), they needed the African “chiefs” to maintain order, to settle disputes, and to collect labor and taxes.
  - 3. Though the British made a fetish of propping up the indigenous authorities through their policy of “Indirect Rule,” to a greater or lesser degree, all the empires were in the same boat.
  - 4. The African chief (or king, or headman), then, found himself in a delicate, man-in-the-middle position under colonial rule. His followers expected him to represent their interests to the European authorities; those authorities expected his assistance in carrying out colonial mandates. Do the first job too well, and risk being replaced by someone more “cooperative”; do the second too well, and risk being labeled a sellout or stooge and rejected by your own people.

IV. Culturally, colonial rule meant the institutionalization of notions of white supremacy and of European culture as the model for “civilization.” Western-style education—dominated by Christian missionaries—was the key to the limited advancement available to Africans in the system.

- A. A vast literature, including many distinguished novels and stories, plumbs the psychological and social implications of these realities.
- B. Africans’ responses ran a huge and complex range, from embarrassing imitation to outright rejection and rebellion. A great many trod an uneasy ground of ambivalence, ambiguity, mixed emotions, and syncretism—the mixing of native and imported cultural traditions.
- C. We can close, though, with one observation that foreshadows our later look at African nationalism: Many of those who led the anticolonial revolt were, in fact, those who had gone farthest in systems of Western education.

**Suggested Reading:**

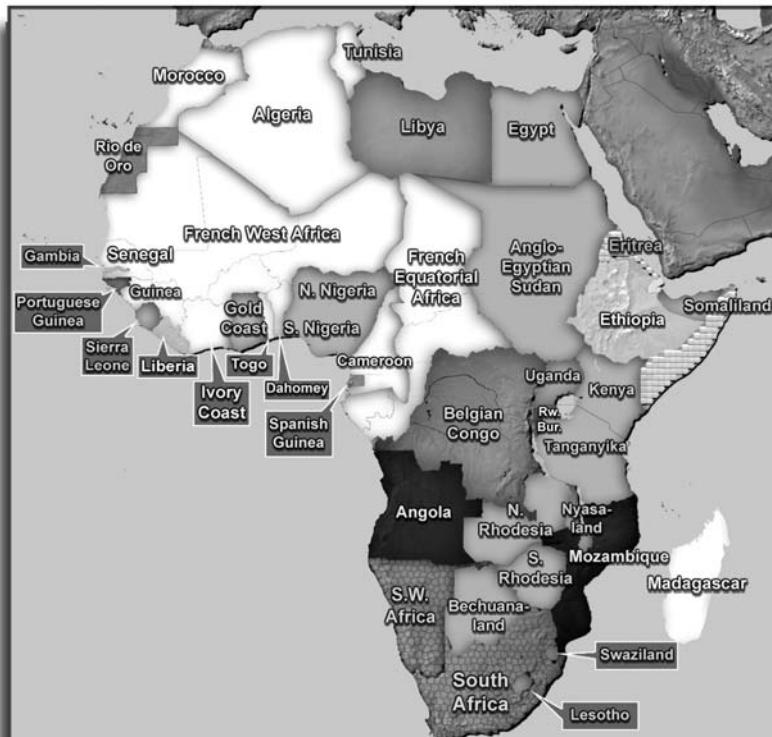
Erik Gilbert and Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*, chapter 14.

Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, chapters 23–24.

Kenneth Vickery, *Black and White in Southern Zambia: The Tonga Plateau and British Imperialism, 1890–1939*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What do you think was the main psychological impact on people who became subjects of foreign rule?
2. How would you compare the “export orientation” forged under colonial rule with the African “exports” of earlier eras dominated by the slave trade or “legitimate commerce”?



## Colonial Africa, 1924

**BRITISH:** Bechuanaland, Egypt, Gambia, Gold Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, Nyasaland, Lesotho, Rhodesia (North and South), Sierra Leone, Somaliland (Eastern), Sudan, Swaziland, Tanganyika

**FRENCH:** Algeria, Cameroon, Dahomey, French Equatorial Africa, French West Africa, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Morocco, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia

**PORTUGAL:** Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea

**OTHER:** West Somaliland, Libya, Eritrea (Italian), Rio de Oro (Spain), Spanish Morocco (coastal area), Spanish Guinea (near Cameroon), Belgian Congo, South Africa (part of British Empire but self-governed by white settlers) and South West Africa (administered by South Africa under League of Nations mandate)

## Lecture Twenty-Two

### Colonial Africa—Comparisons and Change

**Scope:** Commonalities existed, but the experiences of Africans under colonialism were hardly identical. Each metropolitan power developed a particular “flavor,” which sometimes made a real difference. The British devotion to “Indirect Rule” elevated “tribes” to a semisacred position and produced some mistrust of well-educated “detribalized natives.” The French, on the other hand, through the policy of “assimilation,” granted limited space to the emergence of “black Frenchmen.” (The Portuguese cultivation of a handful of *assimilados* represented a faint echo.) The biggest difference in colonial histories, however, depended on a simple question: How many European—white—*settlers* came intending to stay? This affected Africans in countless ways but most directly in whether they retained or lost their land. Finally, we note that the French and the British both committed themselves to “developmentalism” from World War II forward, with important consequences.

### Outline

- I. In the last lecture, we stressed some fundamental common features of colonial rule in Africa. In this one, let us add subtlety by describing some important variations, both over space—that is, between different colonies and colonial systems, and over time—by observing how some of the systems changed, especially following World War II.
- II. We have suggested that all empires in Africa, and probably all empires anywhere, made use of various functionaries drawn from the subject populations. In Africa, besides the African soldiers and educated clerks, the most important such figures were the ubiquitous “chiefs.”
  - A. However, there were certainly significant variations of degree in the positions of the chiefs (or kings, or headmen) among the different African empires.
    1. To the British, the key to maintaining order and, thus, to orderly progress, lay in preserving a functioning “tribal system”; this implied supporting a tribal authority structure. It was Lord Frederick Lugard who elevated this idea of Indirect Rule to an influential theory of benevolent imperial administration.
    2. Lugard’s experience was largely in Uganda and northern Nigeria, two places with elaborate royalties, state structures, and bureaucracies. Not coincidentally, British Indirect Rule tended to work smoothest in precisely such places; elsewhere, where authority was more diffuse and elusive, Indirect Rule could degenerate to an almost comedic game of “find the chief.”
  - B. The other empires tended to take a more practical view of the need for African authority figures to serve as assistant rulers. Here, kings and chiefs were more likely to be supported, dismissed, appointed, or even created based on how helpful they were (though this was known to happen in the British sphere as well, when necessary).
- III. In some ways, the opposite side of the coin representing the position of the “traditional chief” was the position of the “educated native.”
  - A. The relative sympathy accorded these two “types” was reversed in the French vis-à-vis the British system.
  - B. An underlying question here was basically this: How universal and accessible was “civilization”? Were people, including Africans who acted in “civilized” ways according to their dress, speech, education, and income, entitled to equal rights?
    1. In *theory*—an important qualification, as many “black Frenchmen” learned—the French answered, “Yes.” And in practice, there was greater scope for advancement through the French policy of *assimilation*.
    2. The British were far less enthusiastic about the “educated native”—often suspected as a troublemaker. It was inconceivable that African representatives would serve in the British Parliament in London—as dozens of Africans from French West and Equatorial Africa did in the French Parliament in Paris.
    3. The Portuguese offered a pale reflection of the French *assimilation*, but the number ever accorded status as *assimilados* was infinitesimal. And many of these were *mestizos*, persons of mixed African and Portuguese descent.

**IV.** One must be exceedingly wary in generalizing about the comparative brutality of European empires in Africa. All of them were capable of appalling abuses, and all have seen those abuses minimized or exaggerated at times, depending on perspectives.

- A.** Having said that, it must also be said that the intensity and longevity of forced cultivation, forced labor, taxation, and corporal cruelty in Portuguese Africa was notable.
- B.** But probably the most brutal regime of all belonged, for a while, not to a nation at all but *personally* to its king: the so-called “Congo Free State” of Belgian King Leopold II. We will examine this notorious episode in our later full lecture on the Congo.

**V.** Germany had an African empire too, of course. But the German case immediately illustrates that colonial empires change over time—because it ceased to exist in 1918!

- A.** To the victors of World War I went the spoils, and the German African colonies were divided among the other colonial powers on the war’s winning side (though South West Africa went to the then recently formed Union of South Africa).
- B.** The German empire did last long enough to ensure that the only major theater of World War I outside of Europe was in East Africa, in and around the German colony of Tanganyika.

**VI.** For my money, the most vital distinction between colonies rested not on which nation owned which but on how many European—white—*settlers* came.

- A.** *Settler colonies*—which we can define loosely as places where substantial numbers of whites (though nowhere near a majority of the total population) came to settle, *intending to stay*—differed in a number of respects.
  - 1.** The intensity of day-to-day racial humiliations, at least in the zones where settlers were concentrated, was multiplied.
  - 2.** The demands for labor were far greater, more intense, and more constant.
  - 3.** Above all, in settler colonies, native people lost land. It is difficult to overestimate this consequence.
  - 4.** The settler colonies were concentrated in southern and eastern Africa (aside from Algeria, which lies outside our sub-Saharan concentration). South Africa was clearly the granddaddy of them all; Southern Rhodesia, South West Africa, Angola, and Mozambique certainly qualify, as to a lesser degree do Kenya and Northern Rhodesia.
- B.** Without minimizing the impositions, the “black man’s burden” in nonsettler colonies was comparatively light. African residents of Nigeria, Togo, or Uganda may have lost their freedom, their sovereignty, but not their land.

**VII.** It is common to divide the colonial period in Africa into three phases: the consolidation phase before World War I, the “high colonial period” between the world wars, and the era leading to colonialism’s end following World War II.

- A.** World War II affected Africa enormously. Approximately 500,000 African soldiers served the Allied side overseas. The mobilization required for the vital war materiel, such as copper, hastened urbanization and strained all and sundry.
- B.** France and Britain, partly because of the enormous debt they owed to African support in the war and perhaps also to ameliorate rising discontent, embarked on substantially more serious development projects after the war. There was a genuine increase in investment in education and in projects designed to benefit a wider range of the population. Although development of a sort had always been on the colonial agenda, the warmer and wider embrace of the process justifies terming the late colonial territories “developmentalist states.”

### **Suggested Reading:**

Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present*, chapters 1–4.  
Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, chapter 24.

### **Questions to Consider:**

1. If you had to be a colonial subject, would you have preferred to be in a British or a French colony?
2. And again, if you were a colonial subject, what difference would living in a settler (as opposed to a nonsettler) colony make?

## Lecture Twenty-Three

### The Lion Awakens—The Rise of Nationalism

**Scope:** It is hardly surprising that Africans began to protest European rule. Yet the early articulations of challenge tended to come from those who seemed themselves to be the most “Westernized”: an African elite that was invariably well educated and often Christian. They tended, at first, *not* to call for an end to colonialism; they called on Europeans to honor the promises made in the name of the “civilizing mission.” To taste real power, however, they needed support from below, from ordinary people with quite material grievances. When those grievances fueled mass urban and rural protests in the years during and after World War II, the movements gathered momentum and became more radical. It may be more accurate to call this *anticolonialism* rather than *nationalism*, however, because the leaders rarely questioned colonial boundaries that included many nations (ethnic groups)—a stance with considerable implications for the future.

### Outline

- I.** In a sense, there were two kinds of protest against colonial rule: the kind that looked “back” and sought to reestablish the independence that Africans had previously enjoyed and the kind that looked forward to a new Africa, different from both the precolonial and colonial models. However, the interface between the two types was complex; they overlapped and coexisted for many people.
  - A.** In the first category, we might place the numerous rebellions (such as the first *Chimurenga* in then Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe) that broke out in the early colonial period, largely before World War I.
  - B.** The genealogy of what is usually called “African nationalism” usually goes back to the second, forward-looking mode. Nonetheless, to illustrate that the lines between the two are quite blurred, some have argued for more direct linkages between so-called “primary resistance” and later movements, and the later nationalists undoubtedly invoked the imagery of precolonial greatness to mobilize their supporters.
- II.** The first generation of nationalists—perhaps we should call them *proto-nationalists*—were, then, modernizers. They tended to accept many of the premises of “Western civilization,” including a faith in education, a scientific worldview, and the notion of progress.
  - A.** These men—and the most visible figures were overwhelmingly male—were an elite by virtue of possessing an unusually high degree of Western-style education. There were exceptions, but many of them were Christians, wore Western-style suits, and were fond of their afternoon tea. They were clerks, teachers, clergymen, journalists, and lawyers.
  - B.** Very few called for the end of colonial rule per se. Rather, they exposed and opposed what they saw as the hollow promises offered in the name of the “civilizing mission”—shortcomings of two main types.
    - 1.** For themselves, for fellow members of the elite, they protested the ceilings placed on their upward mobility. As we saw in the last lecture, the ceilings were lower in some empires than others, but even in the French, where some Africans could live in Paris as deputies of parliament, there was a sense of hypocrisy concerning the imperial promise.
    - 2.** They were not blind to and were often genuinely outraged by the abuses they saw colonialism visit on their fellow less-privileged Africans.
  - C.** Their style of protest was the letter, the petition, the delegation, the polite and respectful but firm and reasoned case that justice and fairness—virtues extolled by the colonizers—demanded better treatment for all and, not least, a recognized voice for themselves.
  - D.** They often were in contact with sympathizers and allies abroad, such as socialists inside the metropoles themselves and Pan-Africanists in the West Indies or America. Few were revolutionaries, but they articulated a vision of a better world.

- E. Their degrees of success varied widely. For every Blaise Diagne, able to obtain the legal status of citizen (rather than subject) for thousands in French West Africa, there was a Harry Thuku, who was jailed in Kenya, or a D. D. T. Jabavu, who retreated in bitterness in South Africa.

**III.** For the African nationalist movements really to take off, they needed to join a head—the elite we have been discussing—with a body—mass participation by ordinary persons unhappy with the colonial situation. It was precisely this prospect that colonial authorities feared most and that would lead to endless complaints of “agitators” trying to stir up “natives.”

- A. This “take-off” is really the subject of our next lecture. But we can note that the preconditions emerged and the storm gathered, most definitely in the decade centered on the Second World War.
- B. In the rural sphere, African peasant farmers increasingly chafed under colonial institutions, such as marketing boards, which held monopoly powers and underpaid producers. The most dramatic example of protest was the cocoa “hold-up”—boycott—in the Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1938.
- C. In the urban areas, African workers organized strikes in vital industries (for example, copper mining, shipping, railway, and gold mining) across the length and breadth of the continent in the dozen years before, during, and after the war. Partly to keep the war effort going, they were granted some significant concessions.
- D. Finally, the African soldiers themselves, fighting and sometimes dying for causes they were told included antiracism and self-determination, became a potent force, exposing the colonial situations obviously contradicting those principles.

**IV.** This is perhaps a good time to raise a fundamental comparative point concerning African nationalism. The root of *nationalism*, of course, is *nation*, which begs the questions of what a “nation” is, after all, and how nationalism is related to it.

- A. If we consider these terms in their European historical context, at least, the *nations* were populations united by a perception of “fellow-ness,” based on common language, common cultural traditions, and so on—“imagined communities,” to use one memorable phrase. *Nationalism* most often referred to the pursuit by these nations of historical self-determination, specifically in their own states—thus the term *nation-state*.
- B. The definition of *nation* just proffered—common language, traditions, and so forth—is extremely close to the one I used early in the course to refer to *ethnic group* (or *tribe*, as that term is used in Africa itself). Indeed, I often use *nation* as a virtual synonym for *ethnic group*, *people*, and *tribe*.
- C. If so, then we must make a very crucial distinction between the “nationalism” of Europe and that of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Africa.
  1. In Africa, as we know, almost every colonial territory included in its borders many nations—usually referred to as ethnic groups or “tribes.”
  2. Although there certainly were instances of single ethnic groups seeking their own independence, classic “African nationalists” generally accepted the colonial territorial units.
  3. Thus, whereas European nationalists sought a state for their single nation, African nationalists faced from the start the formidable task of pursuing a state embodying many nations (or, alternatively, forging a sense of single nationhood). What were the implications of this for the future—especially when the unifying, common enemy—the colonial ruler—was gone?

**Suggested Reading:**

Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present*, chapters 1–4.

Terence Ranger, *Are We Not Also Men? The Samkange Family and African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920–1964*.

Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, pp. 358–360.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why were protests and movements directed against Western colonial powers often led by figures who were among the most “Westernized” themselves?
2. What is nationalism, anyway? How would you compare African nationalism with nationalism elsewhere in the world?

## Lecture Twenty-Four

### The Peaceful Paths to Independence

**Scope:** If Africa's conquest by Europeans unfolded far more rapidly than most had expected, the same (with exceptions) can be said for the ending of colonial rule—in much of the continent, at least—in the generation following World War II. These were incredibly exciting times in Africa, full of expectation. As the pace and demands of African nationalist movements accelerated, and now included outright independence, the European powers found themselves on the defensive. Within the span of a very few years indeed, in the 1950s, Britain, France, and Belgium concluded that a formal empire was no longer worth it. They sought to get out while retaining what stake—largely economic—they could and did this by negotiating deals with the very elites they had once dismissed or suppressed. The nationalists, for their part, were happy to gain the great prize—state power. How would they use it?

### Outline

- I.** From a long-run perspective, the *decolonization* of most of Africa, like its colonization, occurred quite quickly. In 1950, almost no one on any side of the question would have predicted that 1960 would be the *annus mirabilis*, that within a few years either side of that date, the majority of African countries would celebrate independence. But that's what happened.
- II.** We can discern two broad patterns in the transition from colony to independence.
  - A.** The first pattern refers to the nations gaining independence early (around 1960) and doing so in comparatively peaceful fashion.
  - B.** The second refers to the countries—inevitably settler colonies—that saw bloody and protracted liberation struggles, culminating considerably later (1975–1994) in the emergence of independence with majority rule.
  - C.** In this lecture, we consider the first cluster (except for the Congo, given separate attention in the next lecture); we treat the second group in Lecture Twenty-Seven.
- III.** There is great irony in the fact that of the European empires in Africa, it was the French and British empires that were the most reformist and flexible—consciously adopting a “developmentalist” strategy after World War II—that collapsed first.
- IV.** In the French case, skilled *évolués*, such as Léopold Senghor of Senegal and Félix Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, who had taken full advantage of the French policy of *assimilation*, built formidable political machines in the 1940s and 1950s.
  - A.** They gained support because they pressed the French developmentalist state to meet the needs and demands of their fellow Africans, farmers and workers.
  - B.** They did not, until very late in the day, call for independence. Rather, they preferred to push for a full realization of the concept of a common citizenship within a greater French state, including the empire.
  - C.** For their part, French officials found the escalating demands increasingly difficult to manage and began to question whether, on balance, it was worth all the trouble.
  - D.** Charles de Gaulle, who genuinely felt gratitude for the colonies' efforts on behalf of the Free French in the war, thought he could find a halfway house: an offer of essential self-government within the empire. The question was put to referendum in the African colonies in 1958.
  - E.** Although only one colony rejected the offer, choosing total autonomy, it was an important exception: Guinea's Sékou Touré seemed to radicalize many people in the other French colonies with his militant defiance.
  - F.** The die was cast. France itself quickly moved to cut the colonial cord, and the African leaders could hardly afford not to keep pace. All the other French territories became independent in 1960.
- V.** Decolonization in the British Empire shows considerable parallels. The process was somewhat more confrontational, due in part, no doubt, to a traditionally cooler British attitude toward the “educated natives”

who led the nationalist movements. Still, the weapon of the nationalists was the broadside, the rally, the march, the boycott, and the strike—rarely was it orchestrated violence.

- A. In the West African territories of the Gold Coast and Nigeria, such figures as Kwame Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe, both of whom studied in the United States and learned from African-American struggles, played roles roughly similar to Senghor and Houphouët: Press the colonialists to honor the developmentalist promise.
  - 1. Nkrumah is especially significant—one of the giants of African history and often labeled the “Father of African Nationalism.” Truly charismatic, he adopted an increasingly bold vision—not just of independence for Gold Coast/Ghana but also of a “United States of Africa.” His pan-African vision inspired many other leaders, while he himself moved steadily toward socialism.
  - 2. By about 1955, British officials, like the French, were beginning to calculate the costs and benefits of continuing colonial rule versus devolving power and enjoying good relations—especially economically—with future rulers.
  - 3. Nkrumah proved impossible to contain—or, perhaps, not *worth* trying to contain. The Gold Coast became Ghana in 1957—the first sub-Saharan country to gain independence. Nearby Nigeria inevitably followed in 1960.
- B. Again, the die seemed cast, and the tide of independence moved east and south.
  - 1. In East Africa, Tanganyika became independent under another visionary—*Mwalimu* (“the teacher”) Julius Nyerere—in 1961 and Uganda, in 1962.
  - 2. Further south, the British dissolved the Central African Federation in 1963; two of the three members became independent with majority rule—Nyasaland as Malawi and Northern Rhodesia as Zambia. The subsequent history of the third territory—Southern Rhodesia—shows graphically the difference that a substantial white settler population would make. We will come back to that story in subsequent lectures. In any case, the tide of freedom had hit a wall that might be symbolized by the Zambezi River, which divides Southern from Northern Rhodesia.

**VI. The case of Kenya, in East Africa, deserves special attention.**

- A. We have seen a correlation between degree of settlement and path to independence—all of the relatively peaceful transitions surveyed here were in basically nonsettler colonies. Kenya was somewhat on the fence in this regard: Certainly many thousands of settlers held vast estates in the so-called “White Highlands,” though the total white population never approached that of Southern Rhodesia, Angola, or Mozambique, let alone South Africa.
- B. A renowned, dramatic example of armed anticolonial violence did break out in central Kenya. The world knew it as “Mau Mau,” and it was widely interpreted in the West in the 1950s as an almost otherworldly eruption of inherent “native savagery.”
- C. The “Mau Mau” insurgents were largely of the Kikuyu ethnic group; they attacked white settlers and Africans—many also Kikuyu—that they deemed to be collaborators, stooges, and sellouts, such as appointed chiefs.
- D. The rebel attacks resulted, actually, in relatively few casualties—especially among the white settlers. The greatest violence came from the astonishingly heavy hand of British suppression of the revolt.
- E. Nonetheless—or, perhaps, because of Mau Mau—within a few years, the British concluded that Kenya was not worth fighting to keep. And the settlers were not strong enough to defy the British government on their own.
- F. Power passed in 1963 to Kenya’s first president, Jomo Kenyatta, whom the British had imprisoned for years for association with Mau Mau. As with Nkrumah, the British concluded that the wiser course was to try to deal with persons they had once condemned as “forces of darkness.”

**VII. It is worth reiterating that France and Britain ultimately chose to negotiate independence with elites they hoped would be reasonably cooperative economically. It is also true that they sensed that the enormous hopes engendered in the nationalist era would soon turn to disillusionment; better, they reasoned, that people be disillusioned with their own.**

**VIII.** What had the nationalists won? They had wrested control of a state apparatus, designed above all to maintain order and preside over an import/export nexus, secondarily to deliver certain services. What would the winners do with their prize? We will find the answer in Lecture Twenty-Eight.

**Suggested Reading:**

David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire*.

Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present*, chapters 1–4.

Kenneth Kaunda, *Zambia Shall Be Free: An Autobiography*.

Kwame Nkrumah, *The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*.

Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, pp. 373–380, 385–389.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why was it that the most reformist, progressive empires in Africa—the French and British—were the first to be decolonized?
2. Does the history of Mau Mau in Kenya—and the British response to it—bear any comparison to the terrorism and “war on terror” of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century?

## Biographical Notes

**Achebe, Chinua** (1930–). Probably the best-known African writer to the outside world (though not one of Africa’s Nobel Literature Prize winners, which include Wole Soyinka, Nadine Gordimer, and J. M. Coetzee). When his native Nigeria was still under British rule, Achebe published his first and still most famous work, *Things Fall Apart*, a moving and tragic portrayal of an African community facing ever-mounting intrusion by missionaries and colonialists. His subsequent novels offer indelible portraits of the African experience over the past century. His nonfiction includes 1984’s *The Trouble with Nigeria*, a blistering critique of postcolonial African leadership.

**Akyeampong, Emmanuel.** Born in Ghana, Akyeampong completed his Ph.D. in African history at the University of Virginia in 1993 and is a professor of African history at Harvard. He has worked to develop a continent-wide African broadcasting corporation, similar to the American NPR and PBS.

**Amin, Idi (or Idi Amin Dada)** (c. 1925–2003). The Ugandan soldier who overthrew Milton Obote in 1972 in one of independent Africa’s many coups. Large of girth and of personality, less so of intellect, Amin became almost a caricature of clownish African leadership, perfect fodder for those inclined to stereotype. There was little that was funny in his regime, however, as he led the nation to economic ruin and slaughtered opponents and intellectuals by the thousands. When he launched a ludicrous “invasion” of Tanzania in 1979, Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere supported Ugandan exiles in a real counter-invasion that swept Amin from power and into exile.

**Biko, Steve** (1947–1977). The preeminent theorist and voice of South Africa’s Black Consciousness movement, which above all, confronted the psychological burdens of racism and sought to erase feelings of inferiority or dependency among black South Africans. The young medical student was an inspiration to his generation. He was arrested many times, and following the last, he was beaten to death by security forces, resulting in his legendary martyrdom.

**Botha, P. W.** (1916–). The last of the Afrikaner old guard to hold power in South Africa, Botha’s time as head of the country’s government (1978–1989) was marked by halting, ultimately hollow reforms and fierce repression of the opposition. His departure following a stroke in 1989 cleared the way for F. W. de Klerk to free Mandela and otherwise liberalize politics.

**Charas, Erik.** An engineer from Mozambique who received his BS in electromechanical engineering from the University of Cape Town in 2000, Charas developed a propane-driven refrigerator to keep vaccines cool in rural areas where no electricity is available.

**de Klerk, F. W.** (1937–) A quiet insider for most of his career in South Africa’s ruling party, de Klerk nonetheless became the focal point of a new Afrikaner generation that realized that apartheid could not continue. He replaced P. W. Botha as president in 1989 and moved quickly to legalize all political movements. Most dramatically, he released Mandela from jail. The pace of change outran his attempts to control it, but he became a deputy president under Mandela for a time after the election of 1994. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with Mandela.

**Haile Selassie (or Ras Tafari)** (1892–1975). “King of kings, Lion of Judah”—and the last emperor of Ethiopia. As regent (from 1916) and emperor (from 1930), Haile Selassie was an inspiration to many Africans on the continent and in diaspora, given that he was the ruler of virtually the only part of Africa to successfully resist colonial conquest. When Mussolini and the Italians invaded in 1935, his eloquent appeal to the League of Nations was ignored. Restored to the throne by Allied forces in 1941, he ruled—with an iron hand—until revolutionary Marxist army officers overthrew him in 1974, ending the 1600-year Ethiopian monarchy.

**Houphouët-Boigny, Félix** (1905–1993). Although usually included with Africa’s classic “nationalist generation,” Houphouët was a conservative figure in many ways, who barely called for independence before France bestowed it on his home country of Côte d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast). As the nation’s first president for over three decades, he eschewed radicalism and pursued development in quite capitalist fashion—with considerable success, for a time. The Côte d’Ivoire’s stability and growth was often cited as a “miracle,” especially in comparison with such neighbors as Nigeria and Ghana. Alas, the decline set in before Houphouët’s death in 1993, and the country descended into civil war, now in uneasy abeyance.

**Ja Ja** (1821–1891). The former slave who became an entrepreneur and modernizer during the so-called “legitimate commerce” era in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the Niger River Delta, Ja Ja became a power in the production and marketing

of palm oil, needed as a pre-petroleum lubricant and soap ingredient in the West. In the 1880s, when he attempted to circumvent Europeans by getting his own ships, the British consul essentially kidnapped him and sent him into exile. The move was a precursor of approaching colonial conquest.

**Kaunda, Kenneth** (1924–). A deeply religious man, Kaunda was born the son of a Christian pastor who had moved from Nyasaland (now Malawi) into northeastern Zambia. Though not as highly educated as other leading nationalists of his generation, he was a schoolteacher who pressed the movement in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) to greater militancy. He became the country's first president at independence in 1964 and articulated his philosophy of "Humanism," meant to avoid extremes of left and right. He was never a dictator but became increasingly authoritarian as Zambia's copper-based economy went into a tailspin from the mid-1970s. Under pressure, he agreed to multiparty elections in 1991, which he lost badly, and to his credit, he left power graciously. His star has actually risen again as his successors have disappointed.

**Kenyatta, Jomo** (c. 1891–1978). Another towering figure of 20<sup>th</sup>-century African politics, Kenyatta began as an activist for his own Kikuyu people of central Kenya, who were hardest hit by settler expropriations of land in this British colony. He spent a number of years in Britain, earning a doctorate in anthropology at the London School of Economics and publishing his dissertation, *Facing Mount Kenya*, a comprehensive description—and defense—of Kikuyu ways. Kenyatta denied involvement in the Mau Mau uprising of the 1950s but was tried and imprisoned by the British, who nonetheless eventually concluded, as they had with Nkrumah, that they must deal with him. He went almost straight from jail to government leader and became Kenya's first president at independence in 1963. He was a conservative and autocratic leader in power, moving, as others had, to a one-party state. He died still in office in 1978.

**Leopold II** (1835–1909). The eccentric (to say the least) king of Belgium at the turn of the last century. With a combination of charm and subterfuge, he attracted many to his private, allegedly humanitarian project in Central Africa, the so-called Congo Free State. His real object was rubber, which grew wild there and was needed in the burgeoning automobile and electrical industries. He never set foot in Africa himself, but his army of mercenaries enforced a brutal regime of forced rubber collection. Even in an age of imperialism, the excesses of Leopold's regime provoked an international outcry; some would call it the first human-rights campaign. Under pressure, he turned the Congo over to the Belgian government in 1908.

**Livingstone, David** (1813–1873). A remarkable and enigmatic person in several respects, Livingstone was the son of a Scottish factory worker who became a medical doctor. He eventually went to Southern Africa in the mid-1800s and began a series of quite incredible journeys, on foot, across the continent. He was a gifted naturalist and a shrewd observer of humanity and wrote books that aroused considerable interest in Africa in Victorian Britain. Livingstone was an advocate of "Christianity and Commerce"—but not *necessarily* colonial conquest for Africa.

**Lobengula** (c. 1836–1894). The second and last king of the Ndebele, a nation that started as a breakaway from the Zulu under Lobengula's father, Mzilikazi, and as a "kingdom on the march," eventually settled in the southwest of modern Zimbabwe. Lobengula's eventual misfortune was that his kingdom lay squarely in the path of Rhodes's ambitions to colonize the Rhodesias for Britain. He was deceived by Rhodes's agents into signing several "concessions," which he later repudiated. But a clash was inevitable, and it came in 1893 in a war with Rhodes's forces, which predictably ended with Ndebele defeat and with Lobengula's death under still-uncertain circumstances.

**Lumumba, Patrice** (1925–1961). A former mail clerk, Lumumba rose overnight to political prominence as Belgium moved, with some panic, to decolonize the Congo in the late 1950s. He became prime minister at the head of a shaky coalition as the Belgians left in 1960. His radicalism, which has made him a heroic martyr to some Africans of subsequent generations, earned him the wrath of the West at the height of the Cold War. Faced with several secession movements and foreign interventions, Lumumba was seized by rebels from the southern province of Katanga and murdered in early 1961.

**Maathai, Wangari** (1940–). The first East African woman to earn a doctorate in biology. When she returned to her home of Kenya after study in America in the late 1960s, she began organizing women through her Green Belt Movement to be stewards of the natural environment, specifically by conserving and planting trees. Her outspokenness in confronting the powerful earned her persecution by the former government of Daniel arap Moi. After Moi's departure, she was elected to Parliament in 2003 by an overwhelming majority and was appointed the

Assistant Secretary for Environment, Wildlife, and Natural Resources in the new government of Mwai Kibaki. In 2004, she was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize.

**Machel, Samora** (1933–1986), and **Graca Machel** (1946–). Samora Machel was the brilliant and charismatic leader of FRELIMO, the main liberation movement that fought Portugal in Mozambique. He became the country's president after the Portuguese left in 1975 and instituted radical experiments in collective farming and the like, which met little success. He supported liberation movements in Zimbabwe and South Africa and, in return, became embattled with a rebel movement in Mozambique supported by South Africa. He was adopting much more pragmatic policies when killed in a still inadequately explained air crash in 1986. His wife, Graca Machel, was an impressive force in her own right in education and women's empowerment. Some years after Samora's death, she was remarried...to Nelson Mandela.

**Mandela, Nelson** (1918–). The symbol *par excellence* of the struggle against white minority domination—apartheid—in 20<sup>th</sup>-century South Africa. Trained as a lawyer, Mandela joined the African National Congress (ANC) and helped found the ANC Youth League in the 1940s. In the 1950s, he was instrumental in countless protest campaigns against the mounting apartheid impositions. He was tried for treason but acquitted in 1961, by which time the ANC was banned, and Mandela had concluded that armed struggle was unavoidable. He was convicted of treason and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964. Released in 1990, he led ANC negotiations culminating in the country's first democratic elections in 1994, through which he became South Africa's first African president. He retired in 1999 after one term but remains active in the fight against HIV/AIDS and as a peacemaker in neighboring countries.

**Mansa Musa** (?–1337). With Sundiata, the most famous of the *mansas*, or kings, of old Mali. A more devout Muslim than some of his predecessors, his famous pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324–1325 put Mali on the map of the Muslim and medieval European worlds. He encouraged Muslim scholarship and literacy using the Arabic script in such places as Timbuktu.

**Mbeki, Thabo** (1942–). The son of Govan Mbeki, Mandela's fellow activist and prisoner, Thabo Mbeki practically grew up in the South African freedom movement, though largely in exile. By the 1980s, he was the ANC's shadow foreign minister. An eloquent intellectual, he lacks Mandela's popular touch but was clearly slated for a prominent position when South Africa's regime change became inevitable in the 1990s. He was elected deputy president under Mandela in 1994 and succeeded him as president in 1999; he won reelection easily in 2004. Although his prolonged denial of a connection between HIV and AIDS brought him sharp domestic and international criticism, South Africa has continued to enjoy growth and stability under his leadership.

**Mobutu Sese Seko** (1930–1997). Originally known as Joseph Mobutu, he rose through the ranks of the military in the Belgian Congo and emerged as the central military authority in the chaotic early days of the Congo's independence. In 1965, he carried off a bloodless coup and took power over the vast country. He held it for no less than 32 years, partly due to his own cleverness in using carrot and stick, partly due to considerable aid from the West, which saw him as a bulwark against communism and the only hope for stability. By many accounts, Mobutu became one of the richest men in the world, systematically draining his potentially wealthy country's resources and siphoning aid for his own pocket. He was finally overthrown in 1997 by insurrections emanating from the Great Lakes region in and around the country's east.

**Moshoeshoe** (1787–1870). Born nearly at the same time as Shaka but among the Sotho peoples of the high interior of what is now South Africa. Like Shaka, he was a soldier and statebuilder, though Moshoeshoe had a very different personality and much preferred diplomacy to warfare in pursuing his goals. He united a number of Sotho communities under his overall rule, first in response to the threat of insecurity posed by the "Mfecane." Moshoeshoe lived twice as long as Shaka, which meant that he had to face an entirely different threat in the second half of his life—the advance of the European frontier. He responded to it both diplomatically and militarily and with considerable success; in the end, he chose, reluctantly, to accept becoming a British "protectorate." This move prevented his kingdom of Lesotho being incorporated into modern South Africa.

**Mugabe, Robert** (1924–). Born on a Catholic mission station in northern Zimbabwe (when it was Southern Rhodesia), Mugabe became active in nationalist politics of his home country after returning from a stint teaching school in Nkrumah's Ghana. Jailed for a decade in 1965 by the white-settler-dominated regime of Ian Smith, upon his release, he quickly rose to the head of the Zimbabwe African National Union, the political/guerilla movement based next door in Mozambique. When the intensifying liberation war forced negotiations and an election in 1980,

he became Zimbabwe's first president and remains in power today. When his position seemed threatened in 2000, he initiated seizures of white-owned land and a political crackdown; today, the country is in political and economic crisis.

**Muhammad Ture** (?–1528). The best-known king of the Songhai Empire in the West African savanna, ruling from 1493 to 1528; founder of the *Askiya* dynasty. He is credited with centralizing administration, reviving the trade in gold and salt (as well as cotton, kola, and horses), and, like *Mansa* Musa of Mali before him, making the *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca.

**Naki, Hamilton** (1926–2005). South African who, despite a lack of formal education, worked as an assistant to South African surgeons and became known for his ability to join tiny blood vessels with amazing delicacy and accuracy. Dr. Christiaan Barnard, with whom he worked, greatly admired Naki's skills. In 2003, Naki finally received an honorary medical degree from the University of Cape Town.

**Nkrumah, Kwame** (1909–1972). The “Father of African Nationalism.” Nkrumah, born in the British West African colony of the Gold Coast, studied at universities in America before returning home after World War II. He quickly attracted a political following, especially among younger Ghanaians impatient with Britain's pace of reform. He also articulated a genuinely pan-African vision of Africa's regeneration. With his motto of “seek ye first the political kingdom,” he continually stepped up demands on the British, who eventually concluded that they must deal with him. He led the Gold Coast to independence—with the changed name of Ghana—in 1957, the first sub-Saharan colony to gain it. In power, Nkrumah pursued grand projects of development at home and abroad and became increasingly autocratic, banning opposition and jailing opponents. The military overthrew him in 1966, and he died in bitter exile in Guinea.

**Nyerere, Julius** (1922–1999). A genuine intellectual with a popular touch, Nyerere became the central figure in Tanganyika's nationalist movement after studying at the University of Edinburgh (and translating Shakespeare into Swahili). He became the first president of the country (whose name changed to Tanzania when it merged with Zanzibar in 1964), a post he held until 1985. *Mwalimu* (“the teacher”) Nyerere's Arusha Declaration of 1967 was an eloquent platform of African socialism and self-reliance, but he enjoyed little success in fostering economic development. His version of the one-party state was one of the few that allowed for debate and competition, but he eventually abandoned the model anyway and set a powerful example by living modestly and stepping down from power voluntarily.

**Rhodes, Cecil John** (1853–1902). Born in England, Rhodes went out to what would later become South Africa as a young man and soon made his way to the diamond fields of Kimberley. Through his company, De Beers, Rhodes oversaw the conversion at Kimberley from a “rush” to a modern, deep-level mining industry, employing costly technology and many thousands of miners. A man of great political as well as financial ambitions, he became prime minister of the Cape in 1890 and served until 1896. Afterward, with a new firm, the British South Africa Company, backed by a royal charter, he financed and orchestrated the conquest of two territories named for him, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, and added them to the British Empire. Buried in the Matobo Hills of Zimbabwe (formerly Southern Rhodesia), he endowed Rhodes Scholarships to Oxford in his will.

**Samori Ture** (c. 1830–1900). A member of the *juula* (Muslim merchant class) in the western Sudan (the savanna belt of West Africa), but better known for his extraordinary military skills, Samori built a new empire around himself in the 1870s. As the French expanded eastward from their base in Senegal, Samori actually re-created his empire several hundred miles to the east and left the French a scorched earth to occupy. Eventually, the French caught up to Samori and met a fierce resistance that more than earned their respect. But he was captured in 1898 and exiled to Gabon, where he died two years later. He is considered a national hero in no less than three modern West African countries.

**Savimbi, Jonas** (1934–2002). A charismatic figure, Savimbi led an Angolan political and military movement, UNITA, for more than 30 years. Based among the ethnic groups of central Angola, UNITA was one of three movements competing for power when the Portuguese departed in 1975. When the rival MPLA, with Cuban and Russian support, prevailed in the capital, Savimbi, backed by South Africa and the United States, launched a seemingly endless civil war. It came to an uneasy close only with Savimbi's death in an MPLA raid early in the new millennium.

**Senghor, Léopold** (1906–2001). A Senegalese intellectual and gifted poet, Senghor first attracted attention in the 1930s with his poems and essays expounding *negritude* and ideology promoting blackness, *africanité*, as positive,

marked by warmth, emotion, intuition. A Catholic, he proved an adroit builder of political alliances in predominantly Muslim Senegal. Becoming a deputy in the French assembly after World War II, he emerged as the obvious choice to lead the country to independence and served as its premier from independence in 1960 to his voluntary retirement in 1980.

**Shaka Zulu** (1787–1828). His father was monarch of the small Zulu chiefdom in the region between the Drakensberg Mountains and Indian Ocean, in the eastern part of today's South Africa, but he rejected the child Shaka, who was raised by his mother, Nandi. He first distinguished himself as a soldier and commander under Dingiswayo, who had begun the processes of political consolidation and military intensification associated with the “Mfecane.” With Dingiswayo's support, he seized the Zulu throne after his estranged father's death in 1816 and, upon Dingiswayo's own death in 1818, took his place as head of a larger confederation. Shaka aggressively expanded and unified this political grouping, converting the meaning of *Zulu* from a small chiefdom to a major kingdom. His exceptional military and statebuilding skills brought him great success for a time, but his was a complex personality. After the death of his mother, his judgment faltered, and he was assassinated by plotters, including his half-brothers and personal aides, on September 24, 1828.

**Smith, Ian** (1919–). The hard-line white-settler leader who came to power in Southern Rhodesia in 1962, just as the Central African Federation, which for a decade had combined Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, was collapsing. Determined to resist the British government's plans to hand over power to the African majorities in her colonies, Smith's government made its own Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain in 1965. He banned African nationalist parties and imprisoned their leaders, including Robert Mugabe. By the early 1970s, Smith's government faced a serious guerilla war, which raged until he reluctantly accepted elections in 1980, bringing Mugabe to power. Unrepentant, he remains a vocal and tireless critic of the black government.

**Smuts, Jan** (1870–1950). A Cambridge-educated intellectual, Smuts, a South African Afrikaner, was also an able military man, as he showed in fighting Britain in the South African or Boer War of 1899–1902 and in World War I, when he fought for Britain in East Africa. He became prime minister of South Africa in 1919, lost the office in elections of 1924, returned to share power as deputy prime minister in 1933, and rose to prime minister again in 1939, when South Africa, by the thinnest of margins, entered the war on the Allied side. Though Smuts had been one of the builders of segregation, he was viewed as too soft and moderate by “purified” Afrikaner nationalists, who defeated him in 1948—and began the imposition of apartheid.

**Sundiata (or Sundjata, Sunjata, Son-jara)** (c. 1210–c. 1260). The founder king of the major West African savanna empire of Mali in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The story of Sundiata is the basis of the most famous epic from Africa, transmitted in its considerable length orally for several centuries and eventually recorded, translated, and published in many versions. Sundiata illustrated personally the symbiotic nature of religious conversion—described as a devout Muslim in some contexts, still clearly concerned with older, land-based spirits in others.

**Tippu Tip (or Hamed bin Muhammed)** (c. 1830–1905). An Arab/Swahili trader and warlord who established a trading/raiding state in what is now western Tanzania and southeastern Congo in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. He carried out considerable depredations in search of ivory and slaves, which were moved east to the coast and Zanzibar. He eventually became a sort of regional governor for a time under Leopold's Congo Free State before retiring to Zanzibar in 1891.

**Verwoerd, Hendrik** (1901–1966). The most elaborate theorist of grand apartheid in South Africa. Before and after becoming prime minister in 1958, Verwoerd envisioned a future South Africa in which black Africans would have no role other than certain forms of labor; their social and political “futures” would be strictly away in the barren reserves (later *Bantustans* or “homelands”). He had absolutely no patience with opposition, banning the ANC and other parties in 1960. His government tried Mandela and sent him to prison for life. He was dramatically assassinated in parliament in 1966 by a deranged white man.

# **The African Experience: From “Lucy” to Mandela**

**Part III**

**Professor Kenneth P. Vickery**



**THE TEACHING COMPANY ®**

## **Kenneth P. Vickery, Ph.D.**

Alumni Distinguished Undergraduate Professor,  
North Carolina State University

Ken Vickery was born in Washington, D.C., and raised in Virginia and Mississippi. He received his B.A. degree with Phi Beta Kappa honors at Duke University in 1970. He went on to study sub-Saharan African history at Yale University under the late South African historian Leonard Thompson. His dissertation, a study of the political economy of southern Zambia in the colonial period, involved both archival and extensive oral-historical fieldwork. Yale awarded him the Ph.D. degree in 1978.

Professor Vickery joined the history faculty at North Carolina State University in 1977, where he continues to teach and serves as the department's Director of Undergraduate Advising. He has been a visiting professor on several occasions at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and at Meredith College. In 1993, he was awarded a Fulbright teaching fellowship and spent the entire year of 1994 as Fulbright Visiting Associate Professor in the Department of Economic History of the University of Zimbabwe in Harare.

Dr. Vickery was inducted into the Academy of Outstanding Teachers at NC State in 1986. In 2005, he was named Alumni Distinguished Undergraduate Professor, the university's highest teaching honor.

Professor Vickery has continued to conduct research during his 11 journeys to Africa. His book *Black and White in Southern Zambia: The Tonga Plateau Economy and British Imperialism, 1890–1939* (1986) was a finalist for the Herskovits Prize, given annually by the African Studies Association for the outstanding book in African studies in any discipline. He has published numerous articles and reviews in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *American Historical Review*, and other journals. In 2006, in honor of the anthropologist Elizabeth Colson, he edited and prepared a collection of 15 essays, *The Tonga-Speaking Peoples of Zambia and Zimbabwe*. Professor Vickery is also preparing a biography of Sir Roy Welensky, Prime Minister of the Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland (1956–1963), set in the context of Southern African labor history.

## Table of Contents

### The African Experience: From “Lucy” to Mandela

### Part III

<b>Professor Biography</b> .....	i
<b>Course Scope</b> .....	1
<b>Lecture Twenty-Five</b> The Congo—Promise and Pain .....	3
<b>Lecture Twenty-Six</b> Segregation to Apartheid in South Africa .....	7
<b>Lecture Twenty-Seven</b> The Armed Struggles for Independence .....	10
<b>Lecture Twenty-Eight</b> The First Taste of Freedom.....	14
<b>Lecture Twenty-Nine</b> The Taste Turns Sour .....	18
<b>Lecture Thirty</b> The World Turns Down—The “Permanent Crisis” .....	21
<b>Lecture Thirty-One</b> A New Dawn? The Democratic Revival .....	23
<b>Lecture Thirty-Two</b> The South African Miracle .....	25
<b>Lecture Thirty-Three</b> The Unthinkable—The Rwanda Genocide.....	28
<b>Lecture Thirty-Four</b> The New Plague—HIV/AIDS in Africa.....	32
<b>Lecture Thirty-Five</b> Zimbabwe—Background to Contemporary Crisis.....	35
<b>Lecture Thirty-Six</b> Africa Found.....	38
<b>Timeline</b> .....	Part I
<b>Glossary</b> .....	Part I
<b>Biographical Notes</b> .....	Part II
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	41

## The African Experience: From “Lucy” to Mandela

### Scope:

This course of 36 lectures is intended to provide a general introduction to Africa and its history. To many in the West, Africa has often seemed to be the Lost Continent—“lost” in two senses. The first would be *lost from view*: Many of us simply don’t hear much or know much about the place and its past. The second would be “lost” in the sense of *hopelessly lost*: What we do hear seems overwhelmingly negative, dominated by poverty, disease, disasters, violence, and tyranny. Our aim is certainly not to sugarcoat, explain away, or make excuses; there is enough reality behind these images to make doing so a genuine disservice. Our objective is to provide a fuller and more balanced view, a greater appreciation and understanding of the complexity of the African experience.

This course will focus primarily on Africa south of the Sahara Desert. This reflects the training, research interests, and teaching concentration of the instructor. Indeed, for related reasons, if there is a privileged subcontinent in the course’s coverage, it would be Southern Africa. The Republic of South Africa, in particular, features prominently, in part because it is by far the most developed and powerful country within our scope, but also because its history at many junctures yields fascinating comparisons with the history of the United States. Nonetheless, we will devote plenty of attention to themes and developments centered in West, Central, and East Africa. Although the sequence of lectures is essentially chronological and based on dynamics unfolding in the whole continent or in a major subregion, at several points, we will devote a lecture to a specific country, such as Ethiopia, the Congo, or Zimbabwe, in addition to South Africa.

History is often described as drama; if true, it is played out on a stage. Our original “stage” comprises the many natural environments of the African continent. Following an introductory lecture, we begin our course with descriptions of the basic ecological zones of Africa, then sample some of the more spectacular specific places, such as Mt. Kilimanjaro and the Victoria Falls (one of the seven natural wonders of the world). We continue by considering African history in the truly long run. This, after all, is the so-called “cradle of mankind,” and we examine not only the evidence concerning human origins but the transformation of human society from hunting and gathering to agriculture and the Iron Age. We analyze the emergence of essential social categories related to kinship, ethnic identity (what is a “tribe”? ), and politics—the groundwork for African states and kingdoms.

We pause in Lecture Seven to mark an exception to our sub-Saharan focus by looking briefly at ancient Egypt and its connections to Africa further south, upstream on the Nile.

Lecture Eight surveys the enduring importance of religion—indigenous, as well as Islam and Christianity—and the following lecture provides an overview of the ancient outpost of Christianity, the Ethiopian kingdom. We then encounter some recurring themes of the course—statebuilding and the connection with long-distance trade—by exploring the “golden age” in the West African savanna, the rise of the Swahili city-states on the east coast, and the massive ruins of Great Zimbabwe in the south.

Some 500 years ago, global history reached a turning point, symbolized rather well by Columbus’s voyage. In Africa as elsewhere, from this point forward, relations with Western powers become increasingly relevant. Over a span of six lectures, we illustrate this by investigating two absolutely critical developments: West Africa’s long, deep, and tragic involvement in the Atlantic slave trade and the origins of modern South Africa, beginning with the Cape Colony in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and culminating in the discoveries of diamonds and gold in the late 19<sup>th</sup>.

By that point, Africa’s encounter with Europe reaches another crucial juncture. Important as the slave trade and proto-South Africa were, most of Africa retained its independence and was not colonized until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Then, in a very short space of time, it was—in fact, virtually the entire continent was carved up and added to one or another European empire. We look at the reasons for this sudden imposition, African resistance, and the commonalities and differences in various colonial systems.

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, however, under intense pressure from African nationalists, the colonial edifice began to crumble nearly as fast as it had been built. But the paths to independence varied dramatically from colony to colony, especially between those that achieved decolonization peacefully and those where bloody liberation wars emerged. Nonetheless, with the final triumph of Nelson Mandela and his movement in South Africa, by the 1990s, colonialism and/or white minority rule were things of the past.

The drive to independence engendered great hopes and great expectations. After an initial period with genuine achievements, things began to turn sour—a bitter disappointment for so many. We analyze the factors—both internal and external—contributing to this downturn. We consider particularly appalling situations, to wit, the Rwanda genocide and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Yet we observe as well not only the South African “miracle” but also a revival of democratic spirit in many corners of Africa. We conclude with an assessment of Africa at the start of the millennium, mixing sobering reality with some reasons for hope, however cautious.

## Lecture Twenty-Five

### The Congo—Promise and Pain

**Scope:** We pause here to devote a lecture to a single, vast, and crucial country: the Congo. The Congo's history seems to throw into stark relief the processes we have been examining: conquest, colonization, decolonization. Henry Stanley supervised the creation of a colonial regime that was initially the possession, not of the Belgian state, but of Belgian King Leopold II *alone*. So vicious were the means used by Leopold's agents to extract red rubber from the Congo rain forest that an international protest movement arose in response. Much later, the Belgians abandoned a more paternalistic rule with a haste that suggests panic. This move set the stage for the *Congo crisis* of the early 1960s, and all manner of foreign intervention. Visionaries, such as Patrice Lumumba, lost out to the iron hand of Mobutu Sese Seko, who in 32 years of power set the African standard for incompetence and corruption. Today, the country wallows in civil war. This is not a story for the fainthearted.

### Outline

- I. *Congo*, like *Timbuktu* or *Zulu*, conjures up all sorts of images in the Western mind. Whatever their validity, there is no getting around the significance of the place.
  - A. We pause to focus on the Congo at this particular point because it provides vivid illustrations of the processes we have been examining: conquest, colonization, and decolonization.
  - B. For continuity's sake, we will carry the Congo story further, up to the present. Thus, this lecture is something of a bridge between past and future lectures.
- II. We need to clarify first that there are two countries marked "Congo" on Africa's map.
  - A. First is the more northerly Republic of Congo, whose capital is Brazzaville. It was a French colony that gained its independence in 1960.
  - B. The second is the Democratic Republic of Congo, whose capital is Kinshasa. The name of this country was changed to Zaïre in 1971, then back to Congo in 1997. It is this country on which we will focus in this lecture.
- III. The Congo is a huge place—as big as the United States east of the Mississippi.
  - A. It encompasses much of a gigantic rain forest, vast savanna belts, and mountain and lake environments.
  - B. It includes scores of ethnic groups and languages and was home to numerous major kingdoms, such as the Luba, Lunda, and Kuba. Perhaps it is little wonder that it has proven such a challenge.
- IV. The modern Congo originates with the rather amazing and still shocking tale of Belgian King Leopold II, a man of gargantuan appetites and ambitions and—let us state it plainly—greed. He never set foot in the Congo but was ultimately responsible for devastating the lives of millions and starting the country down a path from which, in some ways, it has never recovered.
  - A. His first vehicle in getting his share of the "magnificent African cake," as he called it, began with his founding of the International African Association, which he promoted as a philanthropic project with a civilizing mission.
  - B. In reality, his aims were more material, and his first means of building a fortune was through ivory.
  - C. Eventually, however, he turned to rubber, needed, of course, for the new electrical and automobile industries. Leopold's economic bounty perfectly illustrates the relation between the scramble for Africa and the industrial age.
  - D. Leopold's "Congo Free State" was something unique. This was *his* project, his colony, not the possession of the Belgian government. His principal henchman was none other than Henry Stanley—yes, *that* Henry Stanley.
    1. One of Stanley's tactics was "treaty-making": Accompanied by a well-armed force, Stanley persuaded indigenous rulers to agree to a legal document giving certain rights to the king.
    2. Most of these rulers were illiterate and had little understanding of what they were agreeing to.

- E. To get the rubber, Leopold unleashed an army of agents—rogues and sadists—who forced the population to collect the wild rubber, which was difficult and dangerous work in itself. At times, these agents took family members of the workers as hostages and insisted on getting quotas of rubber from the workers. Failure to meet the assigned quota often resulted in the loss of one's hand, foot, ears, nose, or head.
- F. Eventually, the Western world—a world that had, obviously, no objection to colonialism per se—became so appalled by the excesses that what might be seen as the world's first international human rights movement arose. The pressure finally led to Leopold turning the Congo over to the Belgian government in 1908. One reputable scholar estimates that Leopold's mayhem had depopulated the Congo by some 10 million.

V. For the next half-century, the Belgians reigned over a generally quiet colony. In fact, the Belgian government delegated a substantial amount of its responsibility.

- A. The Catholic Church played an unusually large, quasi-public role, especially but not exclusively in education and health.
- B. The Belgians granted gigantic monopoly concessions over vast regions to private firms. Union Minière, for instance, held exclusive rights over the colony's most lucrative resource, copper from the Katanga region.
- C. At its best, the system represented a reasonably benevolent though firm paternalism. Union Minière led the way, for instance, in the “stabilization” of its labor, allowing workers to reside with their families in company towns, with company provision of services.
- D. None of the colonial powers was fond of Africans engaging in politics, because this was equated with “troublemaking.” But the Belgians were especially resistant to any notion of African involvement in decision making. Theirs was a “direct rule” with little place for notions of “assimilation.”
- E. As a result, when the winds of African nationalism began to blow in the 1950s, the Belgians, at first, cracked down hard, then permitted only the most modest exercises in local elections. Political parties were legalized only in August 1959; then, astonishingly, the Belgians announced in January 1960 that independence would be granted in six months.

VI. The Belgians had done virtually nothing to prepare the nation for independence. If France and Britain eventually showed a haste to decolonize, Belgium showed a panic. Given the size and the diversity of a country with fewer than a dozen university graduates, what followed was perhaps predictable.

- A. The country's first leader, the former clerk Patrice Lumumba, was almost immediately faced with a series of secession crises. His charisma combined with his radical agenda did not endear him to the West. Although he was killed by Congolese assassins in 1961, after only six months in power, it has now been established that external Western powers were involved in his murder.
- B. There ensued a half-decade of incredibly complex chaos, which saw the country remain a single entity of sorts mainly through the efforts of a United Nations intervention.
- C. Behind the scenes, a shrewd young army officer, Joseph Mobutu, was consolidating his power. In November 1965, he pulled off a bloodless coup d'état.

VII. Thus began 32 years, no less, of Mobutu's regime. We asked in the last lecture what Africa's new rulers would do with their power, and we will see that the answers vary and change. In Mobutu's case, the answers are clear and disheartening.

- A. Internally, Mobutu was quite prepared to hammer any opposition, but he also showed considerable political acuity, rewarding allies or buying off rivals, adept at wielding both carrot and stick.
- B. Internationally, he played the geopolitical game rather cleverly, adroitly positioning himself as a friend of the West to keep the Cold War-era aid coming.
- C. Above all, he lined his pocket, on a colossal scale, becoming literally one of the richest men in the world. Most of the wealth wound up in European banks and real estate.
- D. Eventually, the center could not hold. De facto, “Zaire” (as Mobutu had renamed the country), had largely ceased to exist by the 1990s. A rebellion launched from the east in 1997 quickly drove him into exile, where he died shortly thereafter.

VIII. Since Mobutu's fall, alas, the situation is little better.

- A. A major civil war, complicated by spillover from Rwanda and other Great Lakes countries, has festered.
- B. Congo has always been a target of external interest because of its enormous resources, including *coltan*, an element used in cell phones.
- C. With Congo's always considerable mineral wealth the prize, in fact, numerous nations, including several from Africa, have descended in force on the country, a perverse rendition, in a sense, of the era of Leopold and the scramble.

**Suggested Reading:**

Bill Berkeley, *The Graves Are Not Yet Full: Race, Tribe and Power in the Heart of Africa*, chapter 3.

Howard French, *A Continent for the Taking: The Tragedy and Hope of Africa*, chapters 3, 6–7, 10–11.

Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*.

Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*.

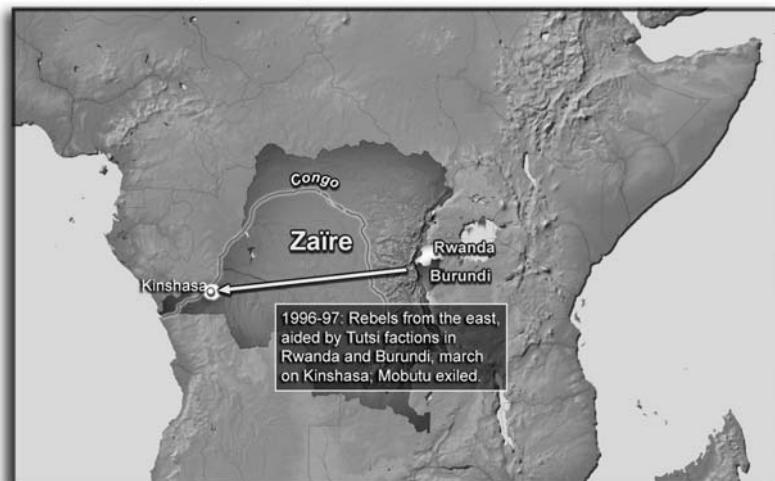
Michaela Wrong, *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz: Living on the Brink of Disaster in Mobutu's Congo*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Author Adam Hochschild finds something distinctly modern in the fact that Leopold never set foot in “his” Congo—pain or misery inflicted impersonally, from a distance. Do you agree?
2. How did the Cold War affect the course of Congo/Zaire’s history?



**The Congo across History:** When we speak of the Congo in this series, we are usually speaking of what might be called Congo-Kinshasa, as opposed to Congo-Brazzaville. Congo-Kinshasa has a storied litany of names and rulers across time, as the key shows.



**The Fall of Mobutu:** Joseph Mobutu, later Mobutu Sese Seko, was among the most savvy but also most ruinous of Africa's autocrats, ruling Congo (which he renamed Zaire in 1971) for 32 years. This map, displaying his overthrow with the help of factions from Rwanda and Burundi, underscores the regional interconnectedness of African history, a theme of this course.

## Lecture Twenty-Six

### Segregation to Apartheid in South Africa

**Scope:** We last touched South Africa at a stage where colonial conquest was complete, the country unified, and mining-based modernization well underway in a context of white supremacy: the age of segregation. In the years following World War II, when the sun began to set on European colonial rule in much of Africa and on America's own version of segregation, South Africa moved in the opposite direction. When the Afrikaner National Party came to power in 1948, it took numerous bold steps to entrench and intensify white supremacy—forever—though not without challenge, of course. Such leaders as Nelson Mandela organized incessantly for the rights of the black majority. All such efforts were crushed ruthlessly, and by 1960, Mandela and others concluded that armed revolution was the only course. In 1964, Mandela was given a life sentence. White supremacy was in the saddle. What combination of forces would end it?

### Outline

- I. In the years following the Second World War, when other parts of the world, such as the French and British colonies in Africa and the United States, began to move with some seriousness toward racial equality, the country of South Africa moved, with great seriousness, in the opposite direction. We can call this the transition from segregation to *apartheid*—a word from Afrikaans meaning literally “apartness,” a word I am sure you have heard many times. It was apartheid, of course, that made South Africa notorious in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- II. Let us begin by offering what may be a rather different perspective on segregation. I will rely largely on the work—brilliant work, in my view, certainly stimulating—of the late John Cell.
  - A. Cell, a son of the American South himself, wondered why systems called segregation emerged in the United States and in South Africa at about the same time—the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The word did not exist before then.
  - B. Like me, and like many of you perhaps, Cell assumed that segregation—what he called the “highest stage of white supremacy”—was the product of a rural past, created by ignorant, backward people, the opposite of progressive. Modernization, development was fundamentally at odds with such irrationality and would gradually erode segregation.
  - C. His research and his reading—especially of a younger generation of South African historians—led him in a quite different direction. Cell began to conclude that segregation was not a throwback, a leftover from a frontier past but, rather, a response—an innovative, even creative response—to conditions of turbulent change: the onset of substantial urbanization and industrialization, in both South Africa and the U.S. South.
  - D. Segregation, then, represented the *modernization of white supremacy*. Racial discrimination was not necessarily incompatible with overall economic development; indeed, it might actually contribute to growth—through the creation of a cheap supply of labor, for instance. There was certainly separation in numerous spheres, but at the macro-level, the societies were actually becoming more, not less, intertwined—integrated, if you like.
  - E. In the South African case, the racial pillars of the segregated society—a society increasingly driven by an urban, industrial dynamic—were a radically unequal division of land, a resultant cheap migrant labor system, and a white monopoly on political power, symbolized by the voting franchise.
- III. What, then, was the significance of the move from segregation to apartheid?
  - A. It is common to refer to the South African election of 1948, which brought the “purified” Afrikaner Nationalist Party to power and marks the onset of apartheid, as a “watershed” in South African history. I do not accept the metaphor.
  - B. The notion of the watershed is based on the assertion that the “water”—events, ideas, history—is running in a fundamentally different direction on one side of the divide compared to the other side.
    - 1. But the trend in South Africa after 1948 was not fundamentally different from the trend before that date, as evidenced in a speech by Jan Smuts, prime minister of South Africa in 1919 and again in 1939.

- 2. The pillars of apartheid—land, labor, and power—were the same as the pillars of segregation, and they had been solidly erected in the segregation era.
- C. What was different was the deadly serious effort by South Africa’s apartheid-era rulers to intensify every form of racial discrimination and, most important, in my view, to make white supremacy *permanent*. It was a project to seal off the future, to craft a “final solution” (I realize the gravity of the term) to the country’s “racial problem.”
  - 1. To this end, the National Party government passed an avalanche of new legislation in the 1950s, designed to regulate every aspect of race relations: Miscegenation and intermarriage were outlawed; total separation in every form of public amenity and in urban residential areas was enforced.
  - 2. “Bantu education” emasculated the mission-based but open-ended schooling available to blacks and imposed what one critic called “education for servitude.”
  - 3. Under Prime Ministers Verwoerd (1958–1966, considered the system’s greatest theorist) and Vorster (1966–1978), the government pursued its vision of “grand apartheid.”
    - a. Each of South Africa’s 10 major Bantu ethnic groups (Zulu, Xhosa, Venda, and so on) would ultimately find its political destiny in its own “homeland,” its portion of the land set aside as “reserves” for blacks in the land laws of 1913 and 1936.
    - b. This was “divide and rule” with a vengeance. There was to be no common political future.
    - c. Given that all 10 homelands combined constituted 13 percent of South Africa’s total land area, designed in theory to accommodate 75 percent of the population, there was, in fact, no possibility that all the “tribes people” assigned to a given homeland could actually make a living there; they would have to continue to migrate and work in white South Africa.
    - d. The architects of apartheid, therefore, never entertained the notion of ending their dependence on black labor. This was not true and total separation but an elaboration on continued *unequal integration*.

**IV.** Needless to say, South Africa’s nonwhite population (blacks, “coloureds,” and Asians) did not take all this lying down.

- A. A new generation of black activists, coming of age in the 1940s and 1950s, injected a new strain of militancy and—understandably, as apartheid set in—urgency to protests in the name of equality. Within the African National Congress (ANC), founded in 1912 as the petitioning organ of the elite, this change was symbolized by the mass-party but nonviolent vision of the Youth League and one of its founders, Nelson Mandela.
- B. Throughout the 1950s, these activists constantly escalated their own campaigns in response to the government’s measures. In 1955, the ANC and allied organizations adopted the Freedom Charter, a virtual constitution for a future nonracial, egalitarian South Africa.
- C. The dialectic of move/countermove on both sides reached a climax at Sharpeville, south of Johannesburg, in 1960.
  - 1. Police opened fire on unarmed protestors of the hated “pass laws,” which required that Africans carry booklets documenting their right to be and/or work in an urban area. In all, 69 protesters were shot dead.
  - 2. In the aftermath, the government took off its gloves, banning the ANC and many other movements and moving to detention without trial.
- D. For their part, Mandela and his peers concluded that they had “closed a chapter” on the question of nonviolence and that armed struggle was now the only option left to them.
- E. After some initial successes in a sabotage campaign, Mandela and other top leaders were caught, tried for treason, and sentenced to life in prison in 1964.

**V.** White supremacy seemed securely in the saddle. Indeed, the rest of the 1960s and early 1970s were eerily quiet. Economically, South Africa prospered as never before, demonstrating again, perhaps, that racial oppression could be quite compatible with “development.”

**Suggested Reading:**

John Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South*.

George Fredrickson, *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa*, chapter 6.

George Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History*, chapters V–VI.

Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, parts 1–7.

Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, chapters 5–6.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What does the term *segregation* mean? Why wasn't it simply *separation*?
2. What is the significance of the 1948 elections in South Africa?

## Lecture Twenty-Seven

### The Armed Struggles for Independence

**Scope:** South Africa's descent into the rigid white supremacy of apartheid suggested that the "winds of change" sweeping Africa were perhaps not, after all, irresistible. And South Africa was not alone. The most critical difference among various colonies was the size and entrenchment of permanent European settlement. Settlers had something quite tangible to defend—a lifestyle almost always superior to what they could have enjoyed back in Europe—and they were prepared to fight for it. That, in turn, impelled African nationalists to take up arms themselves. One example was Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), where whites declared themselves independent of the British Empire and where a bitter liberation war raged all through the 1970s. In Angola and Mozambique, Portugal, lacking the economic muscle of a Britain or France, held on desperately in support of its colonial settlers against multiple armed African movements. The scars from these conflicts have been slow to heal.

### Outline

- I. The case of South Africa, which we surveyed in the last lecture, demonstrates that the "winds of change" sweeping Africa in the 1950s and 1960s were not, in the shorter run at least, irresistible. South Africa was not alone. The march of majority-rule independence, beginning in West Africa, moving east, then wheeling south, came to a halt—the Zambezi River might serve as symbolic barrier.
- II. All of the African territories that resisted rule by Africans were what we have defined as settler colonies—those where substantial numbers of Europeans came to take up land and livelihoods, with the expectation that they and their descendants would stay.
- III. It should hardly surprise us that most settlers had little sympathy for majority rule.
  - A. Typically, they enjoyed a far better lifestyle than they could have dreamed of back in the metropole. The garden, the verandah, the pool, and maybe best of all, the servants, were all possible, even for the artisanal, let alone the middle classes.
  - B. Thus they felt they had something to hold on to. And, increasingly, they believed that, in the face of African demands, they—or their metropolitan sponsors—would have to fight for it.
- IV. The territories of Angola and Mozambique were, of course, settler colonies. But they were also the colonies of Portugal, and this made a difference.
  - A. Under such dictatorial leaders as António de Oliveira Salazar, Portugal felt no commitment to the virtues of democracy.
  - B. Portugal was itself a poor country, and this meant that, unlike England or France (or even Belgium), Portugal did not have the benefit of what Nkrumah of Ghana called the "neocolonial option": that is, to go ahead and grant independence and depend on your economic power to obtain what you want from your former colonies.
  - C. Thus, Portugal concluded that it could not relinquish, or even loosen, the reins on its colonies in response to African nationalism. Lose the empire, this line of thought went, and you lose everything. Needless to say, Portuguese settlers concurred.
  - D. Nascent African political movements were, therefore, crushed, and early on, in the 1960s, the nationalists took up arms against colonist and settler.
  - E. Rather like the Belgian Congo, these places were huge territories, parceled out to concessionaires and containing a multitude of ethnicities with little in common except their suffering.
    1. In light of this, it is slightly surprising that in Mozambique a single liberation movement, FRELIMO, dominated the struggle.
    2. Not so in Angola, where three armed movements emerged, each with its own ethnic base.
      - a. In the north, there was the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola, called the FNLA, led by Holden Roberto. It was based on the Congo ethnicity.

- b.** The Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, called the MPLA, was based around the capital city of Luanda and in the central belt and drew ethnically on the Kimbundu (or Mbundu) peoples, as well as on *assimilados* and *mestizos*. This was the most avowedly radical and Marxist of the movements.
    - c.** Based in the central highlands, the eastern portions of the country, and in the south was the UNITA movement (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola), led by the charismatic figure Jonas Savimbi. The ethnic base here was the Ovimbundu people.
- F.** More than a decade of war ensued in both countries. By 1974, young Portuguese military officers had decided the wars were endless and unwinnable and that Portugal's future lay in Europe; they staged a coup in Portugal itself and quickly moved to end more than 400 years of Portuguese colonialism.
  - 1. In Mozambique, the transition went quite smoothly. FRELIMO was the clear heir apparent and came to power under the charismatic socialist Samora Machel.
  - 2. Again, the transition did not go so smoothly in Angola. As independence day approached, a veritable free-for-all broke out, with several foreign powers—South Africa, Cuba, the United States—backing their favored movements. The socialist MPLA came out on top, but its position was exceedingly shaky.
- G.** Alas, in neither country did independence signal the end of conflict.
  - 1. Remember that apartheid South Africa had regarded the Portuguese colonies as buffers against the southward tide of majority rule. If anything, the Portuguese exit prompted much greater South African intervention.
  - 2. In Mozambique, a movement that drew support both ethnically and from resentment over radical FRELIMO measures quickly got South African backing as well. After a further decade of war and the end of South African participation after 1990, the sides negotiated a settlement. Since then, Mozambique has forged a rather remarkable recovery and is often cited as one of Africa's success stories today.
  - 3. Angola, once again, was left considerably worse. With hardly a break after independence in 1975, civil war continued for another quarter-century; there are many Angolans today who have *never* known peace until the last couple of years. Perhaps Mozambique will prove an inspiration.

**V.** Let us turn to Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe.

- A.** From 1953 to 1963, Southern Rhodesia had been joined with Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (now Zambia and Malawi) in the Central African Federation.
  - 1. The Federation experiment, driven by the region's white settlers (most of whom were in Southern Rhodesia), created an economically advantageous bloc and advertised itself as an alternative to either majority rule to the north or rigid apartheid to the south.
  - 2. It is fair to say that most Africans saw the Federation's "partnership" policy, however, as moderated white supremacy.
- B.** The Federation foundered on the shoals of African nationalism. The British acceded to African demands and granted independence to Malawi in 1963 and Zambia in 1964.
- C.** Southern Rhodesia's settlers had other ideas. Led by the redoubtable Ian Smith, they declared independence from Britain in 1965.
- D.** Soon, both major African nationalist parties, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union (ZAPU), which had different ethnic bases, were banned and the leadership was imprisoned or exiled.
  - 1. For a time, Smith enjoyed a honeymoon, but a genuine guerilla war developed in the early 1970s.
  - 2. The war picked up steam after 1975, when the ZANU was able to begin using bases in adjoining and now-independent Mozambique.
- E.** The two liberation movements forged a paper alliance, the Patriotic Front, but never cooperated. After a vicious war resulting in 30,000 dead and a million refugees, Smith negotiated an agreement permitting an open election.
- F.** To the surprise of some, ZANU won an impressive victory, and its leader, Robert Mugabe, assumed the presidency of what was now Zimbabwe, where he remains today. We will continue Zimbabwe's story in Lecture Thirty-Five.

**VI.** Finally, we must mention South West Africa, now Namibia. South Africa had run the place since the German defeat in 1918.

- A. Not surprisingly, a protracted, low-level liberation war developed in this largely empty land as well.
- B. The United Nations, which considered South Africa's occupation illegal, supervised elections leading to independence in 1990, but there is no doubt that the change was mostly due to the dramatic changes unfolding by that time in South Africa itself.

**VII.** All these former settler colonies eventually won their independence. But the scars left by their struggles run particularly deep, as we shall see in our later discussion of Zimbabwe's current crisis.

**Suggested Reading:**

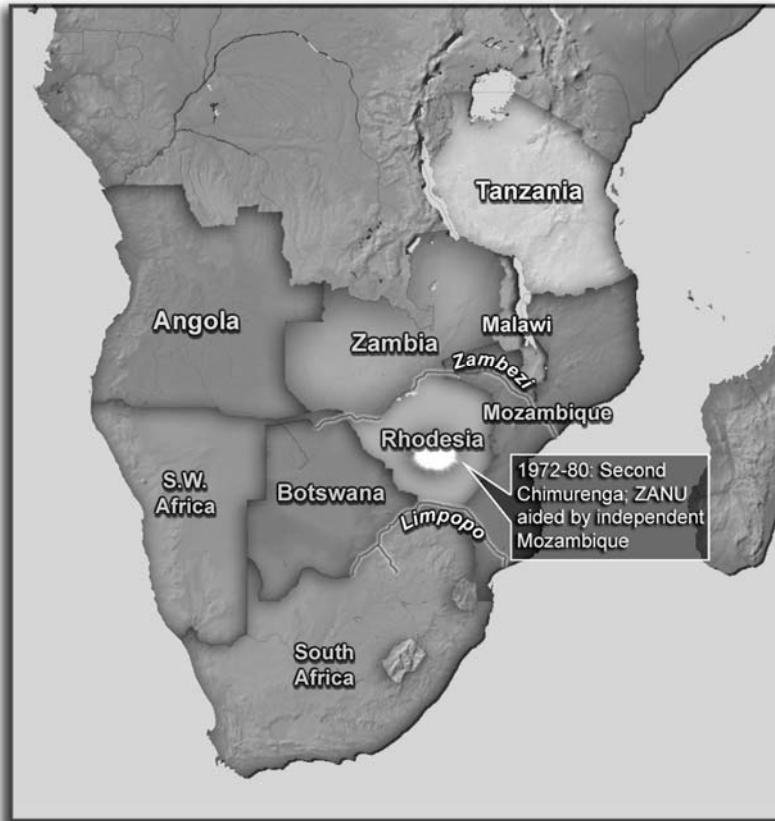
Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present*, chapter 6.

Martin Meredith, *The Past Is Another Country: Rhodesia, UDI to Independence*.

William Minter, *King Solomon's Mines Revisited: Western Interests and the Burdened History of Southern Africa*, chapters 7–8.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. “Mozambique and Angola had the misfortune to be colonized by one of Europe’s poorest empires,” wrote author Frederick Cooper. Why was this a “misfortune”?
2. America’s 13 colonies were, like Southern Rhodesia, possessions of the British Empire. How would you compare the American and the Rhodesian declarations of independence?



### Regional Conflicts in Africa, 1970s

Before the abrupt abdication of colonial rule by Portugal in 1974, both Angola and Mozambique were battlegrounds for liberation wars that drew other parties into the conflict. Cuba and South Africa backed various sides in the Angolan War, and South Africa also interfered in Mozambique. Upon independence, Mozambique assisted guerillas in Rhodesia. Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda also provided bases for ZAPU (and for a time ZANU), drawing retaliatory airstrikes from Ian Smith's Rhodesian government. Even Tanzania played a role as the sole rail route for copper out of Zambia not blockaded ran through that country.

## Lecture Twenty-Eight

### The First Taste of Freedom

**Scope:** While wars of liberation ravaged the Southern African settler states, most countries in the rest of Africa were enjoying the first years of independence. The exhilaration of the nationalist crescendo carried over into a kind of honeymoon period. The triumphant and often visionary new leaders announced great plans for bringing the fruits of independence home to ordinary citizens, and indeed, in a great many cases, they delivered. Schools and clinics multiplied, roads were paved, dams constructed. An expansionary world economy provided a climate in which real growth and development were achieved. Alas, the honeymoon did not last. Understandably, many Africans look back to these years with nostalgia—and with bitterness over what ensued.

### Outline

- I. In the 1960s, when Southern Africa began its immersion in violent conflict and/or heightened repression, most Africans were embarking on the first years of freedom from colonial rule. What was this experience like? Let us return to the question posed at the end of Lecture Twenty-Four: What would the new rulers do with the prize they had won—the formerly colonial state apparatus?
  - II. Anyone who watches film footage of the official ceremonies marking independence—the lowering of the Union Jack or Tricolor, the raising of a brand new flag (for a nation with a brand new name, often enough)—can sense, in the packed-in, surging crowds, one great emotion: Joy! Freedom! Ours at last! Now the world will see the new Africa!
    - A. The feeling was genuine and thrilling. But clearly the expectations raised in the heady ride to independence would be a challenge to meet.
    - B. Nonetheless, the new citizens were not passively awaiting the delivery of the fruits of freedom. The widespread mobilization of the nationalist movements carried over into a widespread willingness to participate in, to personally work toward, the next great triumph: development.
    - C. Thus, when Kenyatta cried out at his post-independence rallies, “*Harambee!*”—“Let us all pull together!”—the crowds yelled it back with enthusiasm. And indeed, many of the achievements in these years depended on the self-help initiatives of energized local communities.
  - III. Nonetheless, there was no getting around the pivotal role of the state. The colonial states had been highly interventionist, sponsoring and orchestrating the colonial economies, especially in the late-colonial developmentalist period. Coolness to free-market approaches, often assumed to begin with socialist or quasi-socialist independent governments, actually had colonial roots.
    - A. The new leaders had no intention of changing this large state role, except perhaps to make it even larger. “Seek ye first the political kingdom,” Nkrumah had said—and use it to add all else, particularly real development.
    - B. Though Nkrumah (and others) had exploited the resentment of farmers over colonial marketing boards, he was quite prepared to retain them and use the margin created with low producer prices to finance other projects.
    - C. In the avowedly radical states, such as Ghana and Tanzania (usually proclaiming themselves “African socialist” rather than rigidly Marxist), a good measure of nationalization took place, as well as experiments with state farms.
      - 1. In Tanzania, Nyerere, whose 1967 Arusha Declaration articulated his vision of socialism built on traditional African values, pushed a disastrous “villagization” scheme, forcing farmers into compact settlements.
      - 2. Such schemes, like the boards and state farms, expressed, perhaps, an ominous fear of a truly independent, vigorous peasantry—despite the fact that the new leaders had partly ridden that peasantry to power.

D. Even in more conservative regimes, it was common to see a state role inserted or expanded in numerous enterprises; *parastatal*—the notion that there was a public/private blend—was a frequently heard term.

**IV.** Whatever the longer-term weaknesses of these approaches, for a good while, they yielded impressive results.

- A. The economic growth of the late-colonial developmentalist period not only continued but increased.
  - 1. Gross national product (GNP) per capita for all of sub-Saharan Africa grew each year in the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, often at rates of a very respectable 2–3 percent.
  - 2. Kenya's per capita GNP rose 30 percent in the 10 years after independence in 1963; that of the Ivory Coast doubled in the 20 years after its independence in 1960.
- B. Even manufacturing industrialization—the litmus test of modernization and development to many, whether on the right or the left—had its moment: It expanded at twice the rate of overall gross domestic product (GDP) between 1965 and 1973.
- C. Despite this growth, African economies failed to achieve a meaningful diversification. What boom there was rested largely on exports of primary products produced by farmers and miners. In other words, the dependency on an export-import economic base was only marginally altered.
- D. In this respect, the expansionary world economy, with—most importantly—buoyant commodity demand and prices, was a critical part of the successes of these years.

**V.** Most impressive of all, perhaps, new African governments kept their promises to improve education and health care.

- A. Between 1960 and 1980, sub-Saharan school enrollment percentages rose by more than 50 percent at the primary level and more than 500 percent at the secondary. All the new nations built universities, which had hardly existed before independence.
- B. Such countries as Tanzania made concerted efforts to give rural populations access to clinics. Infant mortality rates dropped and life expectancies rose. Thus, population increased—not a problem at this point perhaps; later, under different conditions, it would be another story.

**VI.** Allow me to illustrate some of these points with recollections of my earliest visits to the place I know best, Zambia.

- A. When Northern Rhodesia became Zambia in 1964, the new currency was named the *kwacha*, “the dawn,”—which captures perfectly the exhilaration of the times.
- B. The president, Kenneth Kaunda, seemed the epitome of decency. A thoughtful and sincere Christian, Kaunda expounded his political philosophy of “Humanism”—a people-centered vision avoiding the extremes of either capitalism or socialism.
- C. Although obviously still a Third World country, Zambia had an economy that was humming in the mid-1970s: People had work, construction was everywhere, and goods were in the shops. The reason: Zambia, almost totally dependent on copper export, was still riding the long copper boom that had begun in the post–World War II era.
- D. The University of Zambia, with which I was a research affiliate, was a shiny-white, modern complex, full of dedicated teachers (many still expatriates) and idealistic students.
- E. The village where I did much fieldwork enjoyed steady income from maize, cotton, sunflower seeds, and cattle. The pride of the village—and *sine qua non* of the meaning of independence—was the new primary school.

**VII.** There was a dawn, then, in much of Africa, with the coming of independence, and the new rulers deserve considerable credit for it. There were also ill omens, however.

- A. These new rulers rather furtively tried to instill a sense of identity with the new nation—as opposed, especially, to an ethnicity (“One Zambia, One Nation” was Kaunda’s mantra). And they had some success; still, it was a tall order.
- B. Still enjoying, and perhaps deserving, considerable popular support, they could afford varying degrees of tolerance. Already, however, there were moves afoot to stifle opposition. Having won power, none of them planned to surrender it.

**Suggested Reading:**

Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present*, interlude and chapter 5.

Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, chapter 28.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Among Africans old enough to remember, why do so many recall the early years of independence with nostalgia—tinged with bitterness?
2. To what extent were the newly independent states' successes—and, later, failures—affected by the systems created during the colonial period?



## Independent Africa, 1970

Triggered by the independence of formerly British Ghana (Gold Coast) and formerly French Guinea in 1957 and 1958, respectively, independence swept like a wave across Africa in or soon after 1960, the *annus mirabilis* of African history. By 1968, most countries had gained independence. The significant exceptions were in Southern Africa where the settler colonies of Rhodesia, Southwest Africa, South Africa, Angola, and Mozambique resisted African self-rule, eager as they were to preserve their privileges and prerogatives. The road to independence and the aftermath would prove taxing and usually bloody in these countries.

## Lecture Twenty-Nine

### The Taste Turns Sour

**Scope:** Within a decade of independence, the promise of postcolonial freedom began to falter. To the outside world, coups, conflict, and corruption increasingly seemed the order of the day. To get a clearer view, we must examine exactly what it was that African nationalists had won. They inherited countries whose borders were artificial, drawn by outsiders and encompassing many different ethnic groups, religions, and interests. Rather than nations seeking statehood, these were preshaped states seeking to build a sense of nationhood. It should not be surprising that ethnic conflict could sometimes become explosive. The new leaders presided over export-dominated economies with limited capacity to generate real development; many of the elite were quite happy to settle for enriching themselves. When conflict or popular anger threatened stability, rulers turned to one-party states, and armies turned to military coups with alarming frequency.

### Outline

- I.** The honeymoon didn't last; the "dawn" clouded over. Although the degree of decline certainly varied widely and in some places never occurred at all, there is no avoiding the conclusion that in much of Africa, the hope and promise of independence changed to disillusionment. In this lecture, we focus on the political/social aspects of the story; in the next, on the economic.
- II.** We have seen that state power was central—or more than central—in the overall political economy. Important implications flow from this fact.
  - A.** In more developed and diversified societies, there are many ways to do quite well financially. A politician or bureaucrat who loses his or her job through elections or otherwise can turn to a host of other occupations: go back to the law practice, become a lobbyist, turn to business.
  - B.** Such options were far less available in the new African nations. Getting access to the state machinery—at high stations or low—was, in a sense, the only game in town, and that, in turn, meant that it was a game likely to be played with deadly ferocity.
  - C.** If you were inside the "one shelter our former rulers left," as author Chinua Achebe described it, you wanted, and intended, to stay inside. And to those outside, you said, "Stop your clamoring; though you are there, and I here, we must think of ourselves as one; we are doing everything we can and shall pass you morsels through the window."
  - D.** Or, to change the metaphor, "Our challenges are great; our enemies [often erstwhile imperialists] many; don't rock the boat, else we all shall sink."
  - E.** Thus, opposition, dissent, or competition came increasingly to be seen as threat and, depending on the case, treacherous threat, even treasonous threat.
- III.** The upshot was the move, almost everywhere, to greater authoritarianism.
  - A.** The open, multiparty parliamentary systems left behind by the departing colonialists began to be abandoned. But remember that these systems had begun life very late in the colonial day, in a sort of deathbed conversion to the virtues of dispensing democracy. With shallow roots, they were rather easily stunted.
  - B.** One option, chosen by a great many rulers, was the declaration of the one-party state.
    - 1.** As so often, positively or negatively, Nkrumah of Ghana led the way. But Kenyatta of Kenya, Nyerere of Tanganyika, Kaunda of Zambia, Banda of Malawi, Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, and Senghor of Senegal—all the "great ones"—followed suit.
    - 2.** At its best and most sophisticated, the one-party state was posited as a more authentically African political model than the imported one. Rather than constant negative competition, it called for positive search for consensus, rather like the village gatherings of old. Nyerere and Kaunda, in particular, argued in this vein and, indeed, permitted a certain amount of dissent *within the party*.
    - 3.** And, again, the argument goes, "Our challenges are so great—whether to mobilize for development or to foil the imperialists lurking—that we cannot afford the luxury or the wasted time of disunity."

4. At its worst and crudest, the one-party state was simply a quite transparent cloak for iron dictatorship.

**IV.** The one-party state was one aspect of what author and professor Ali Mazrui calls “the search for stability.” And, indeed, if measured by longevity in office, several of the rulers mentioned above found it. But stability was elusive in a great many places.

A. One threat to stability was certainly ethnic conflict.

1. As we know, almost all the African countries contained numerous “nations”—ethnic groups—and faced a rather daunting task, before and after independence, of building a new and larger sense of national identity based on externally imposed units.
2. There’s nothing natural or inevitable about ethnic conflict; tolerance and coexistence are just as common.
  - a. But it’s also not surprising that in a struggle over limited resources, mainly within the arena of the state, people often mobilized along ethnic lines.
  - b. As we stressed early on, ethnicity is fluid; previously quite separate communities might discover enough cultural similarity to mobilize as an ethnic bloc.
3. In its more benign form, this fluidity could lead to endless varieties of ethnic balancing acts—something instantly familiar to students of, say, American politics.
4. But in certain circumstances, it was dynamite. The most obvious example was Nigeria, the most populous country in all of Africa.
  - a. Here, three large ethnic blocs coexisted uneasily: Hausa/Fulani in the north, Yoruba in the southwest, and Igbo in the southeast. Igbo, in particular, had taken to Western education with alacrity and often wound up in relatively elevated positions all through the country; thus, they found themselves to be targets of resentment.
  - b. Anti-Igbo pogroms erupted in the north in 1966. Igbo leaders in the southeast announced that they would secede and form a new nation, Biafra, in 1967.
  - c. Nigeria’s rulers thought otherwise, and a bloody civil war raged from 1967 to 1970. Nigerian “unity” prevailed, though anyone can see, 35 years later, that it remains precarious.

B. Another threat to stability was the military coup. As Mao said, power comes from the barrel of a gun, and any leader anywhere without a loyal army is vulnerable.

1. There is a paradox here because coups were often launched in the name of restoring stability, of combating “indiscipline” and corruption, as we will see later in this lecture. The officers involved—often young ones—would set things aright, then return to the barracks.
2. That rarely happened, though it was not unknown. The problem was, once the precedent was set, a new group of officers would get the idea.
3. Yet again, Nkrumah was in the lead: The shock of his overthrow in 1966 diminished as coup after coup, more than 150 in all, became a dismally familiar bit of news out of Africa.

**V.** Finally, and obviously, we must mention corruption. We looked briefly at Congo/Zaire’s Mobutu, the all-time champion, but many, many others found it impossible to resist the temptation once inside the “shelter,” albeit on a vastly diminished scale.

- A. Some saw themselves as deserving, after all those years of struggle; others, as author and professor Peter Ekeh suggests, saw the state arena as an alien trough, not subject to traditional African mores about accountability and honesty. Eventually, as Ayi Kwei Armah showed brilliantly in his novel *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, given this free-for-all, it simply seemed stupid rather than courageous not to join in.
- B. In a way, the larger problem was that it was often dead-end corruption: a payoff to avoid bigger problems, a rip-off of foreign aid funds, not, unfortunately, a commission on a project that might be genuinely productive.

**VI.** Coups, conflict, and corruption. A picture exaggerated in the West, for sure, but real enough, and it wasn’t Westerners who were paying the price.

#### **Suggested Reading:**

Chinua Achebe. *The Trouble with Nigeria*.

Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*.

Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present*, interlude and chapters 5, 7.

Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Motivations and Constraints*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Was the essential precondition for the “coups, conflict, and corruption” that seemed endemic in Africa of the 1970s and 1980s, in fact, the overly central role of the state?
2. Given the artificial nature of Africa’s borders, should we be surprised at the eruption of ethnic conflict—or surprised that there wasn’t more?

## Lecture Thirty

### The World Turns Down—The “Permanent Crisis”

**Scope:** As many African nations seemed to veer between dictatorship on one hand and chaos on the other, world economic conditions turned against them as well. In hindsight, one can see the mid-1970s as a turning point, marked by the international oil shocks and falling prices for exported African commodities. One response was to borrow ever more furiously—and Africa’s debt crisis, still with us today, was born. By the 1980s, in such places as Zambia, development seemed to many a bitterly forgotten dream; day-to-day survival seemed a more relevant objective. Add to this South Africa’s turmoil and ongoing wars in several hotspots, and more than a few asked: Can it get any worse than this? Then, a funny thing happened: Something like a democratic renaissance began to emerge.

### Outline

- I. Historians are always trying to “periodize,” that is, divide the unbroken stream of time into eras, break points, watersheds, turning points, and so on. The most obvious break point in recent African history is the break between colonial and independent Africa.
  - A. For most of the continent, that point was around 1960.
  - B. But as Frederick Cooper, professor at Yale, articulates brilliantly, it is possible to make a persuasive argument for the mid-1970s as an equally, perhaps more, important dividing line. As Cooper puts it, this is when “modest progress turned into prolonged crisis.”
    - 1. The modest progress, as we have seen, took place in the late colonial and, especially, the early independent years. By almost any measure—health, mortality, literacy, education, overall growth and development, or political and social participation—ordinary peoples’ lives got better.
    - 2. One context for this was an expansionary world economy, which among other things, created demand for exports from Africa’s still-not-fundamentally-altered economies.
  - C. Both of these situations changed—dramatically—beginning in the mid-1970s.
    - 1. The initial stimulus was external. We can start with the oil shocks—major price rises—related ostensibly to Middle East conflict.
    - 2. Partly because of these shocks, Western economies began to contract, with the dire consequence of reducing the demand and price for the primary products, the agricultural and mineral products, coming out of Africa.
    - 3. Meanwhile, some Western nations, notably the United States, responded to the problems by raising interest rates to levels hard to imagine today.
    - 4. Rather suddenly, then, African countries and their leaders confronted conditions in which the value of their exports was falling; the price of their most vital import, oil, was rising; and the cost of funds to make up the difference, let alone invest in future productivity, was rising as well.
  - D. Given the deteriorating terms of trade—that is, what you can bring in in return for what you send out—even the best leaders would have been presiding over places where they “must run faster and faster to stay in the same place.” And, as many Africans would point out, their leaders were often not the best.
    - 1. Most countries began to see a decline in all the realms that had so recently seen improvement: GNP, industrialization, education, health, and infrastructure.
    - 2. Understandably, this decline generated discontent. Those in power, who had already moved to one-party states or military rule, reacted defensively by clamping down even further and making sure that feathering their own nests remained a priority, or they were replaced by new rulers through military coups, who then did much the same.
- II. Allow me to illustrate from Zambia, as I did in the last lecture and will again in the next.
  - A. Zambia’s principal export, indeed only real export, was copper. And demand for copper began to fall almost exactly at the critical juncture of the mid-1970s. It has never quite recovered. Think of telecommunications: Quite apart from the wireless revolution, even the wires changed over to fiber optics, as opposed to metals, some time ago.
  - B. Zambia produces no oil, yet of course, oil is absolutely critical for all manner of transportation and energy.

- C. With a fall in the crucial export commodity and a rise in the crucial import commodity, Zambia needed to produce much more copper just to stay even. It didn't.
- D. In addition, in much of the 1970s, the country was surrounded by wars on three sides: those in Angola, Rhodesia, and Mozambique.
  - 1. The wars produced direct strains: Tens of thousands of refugees and attacks by Rhodesian forces since President Kaunda's personal commitment to the liberation of Southern Africa led him to allow bases in Zambia for Zimbabwean guerilla forces.
  - 2. Zambia is a landlocked country; movement of exports and imports has always been lengthy and expensive. With the wars, two of the three main routes were closed.
- E. Though Zambia was never a place where persons disappeared in the night, Kaunda's rule became steadily more authoritarian, and the dead hand of state (mis)management created all kinds of shortages. Meanwhile, those at the corrupt top continued to get rich. All this exacerbated public anger and inspired attempted coups.

**III.** Many countries, Zambia included, borrowed furiously, despite the rise in interest rates, in attempts to keep going what they could of the economy and social services. They were encouraged to do so in some lending sectors from the First World. These were bad business decisions all around. Debt rose exponentially.

- A. As the ability to make payment faltered, many turned to lenders of last resort—the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank.
- B. What help they got came with the considerable strings of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), which called for a reversal of the large state role and a turn to market solutions, including lowering tariffs, reducing social expenditure, devaluing currency to make exports more competitive, and so forth.
- C. The jury is still out on SAPs in terms of macro-level improvement; certainly some reforms were necessary. But there is little doubt that for ordinary people, life got harder in terms of declining standards of health care and education and rising costs.
- D. The debt crisis is still with us and has recently been the target of campaigns for reduction or forgiveness. The argument is that today's population had nothing to do with the bad decisions (many were not alive) and should not be saddled with insuperable debt-service burdens.

**IV.** On the face of it, Africa's oil-producing countries should have been in a very different boat. A country such as Nigeria—a member of OPEC—should have benefited from the oil shocks.

- A. Yet Nigeria, Angola, and Gabon were what Cooper calls "spigot economies"—the oil was produced by foreign companies for foreign consumers. There was very little linkage to the rest of the economy.
- B. And what revenue there was was wasted by astounding levels of mismanagement and corruption. It prompted Achebe to write his blistering jeremiad, *The Trouble with Nigeria*.

**V.** If all this were not enough, let us add wars. We mentioned Angola, Rhodesia, and Mozambique; add Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Somalia. People in these places suffered the worst of the worst.

**VI.** And add, finally, South Africa, mired in the 1980s in a low-level war of its own. Could things get any worse? Then...phoenix-like, something like a democratic renaissance began to gather steam—the subject of our next lecture.

**Suggested Reading:**

Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*.

George Ayittey, *Africa Betrayed*.

Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present*, interlude and chapters 5, 7.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Which was the greater "watershed"—independence, coming for most countries around 1960, or Frederick Cooper's alternative date of the mid-1970s?
2. Do IMF/World Bank SAPs represent "the new imperialism," as some critics charge, or commonsense prescriptions for improvement?

## Lecture Thirty-One

### A New Dawn? The Democratic Revival

**Scope:** If the “winds of change” were sweeping across Africa in the early 1960s, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, they seemed to affect the whole globe. As the Soviet Bloc and the Berlin Wall fell, authoritarian regimes in many parts of Africa faced unprecedented challenges to open up, to permit opposition organizing and free speech, and to loosen the state’s grip on economic life. There has been considerable debate over whether the impetus for this change came from below, from frustrated citizens, or from outside, from frustrated donors. There is room for both in our analysis. In any case, in country after country, civilian replaced military rule, and/or one-party states gave way to multiparty competition. Of course, as in the heady days of independence, disappointment resurfaced. Nonetheless, certain “lessons learned”—about popular participation, about transparency—seem unlikely to be reversed.

### Outline

- I. It’s still a bit breathtaking to think back to the years of the late 1980s and early 1990s.
  - A. To Americans raised on the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the satellite regimes of East Europe—symbolized by the Berlin Wall—were almost unbelievable and certainly unpredicted.
  - B. But other parts of the world—Latin America and most definitely our focus, sub-Saharan Africa—were equally part of a rising tide of democracy and freedom.
- II. The international context is indeed important for the African case, in two ways.
  - A. On one hand, we have the inspirational power of example—if they can do it, why can’t we?
  - B. On the other, we see the much more mundane form of pressure from international donors, upon which many African regimes had become dependent.
- III. But let’s begin with the more exciting stuff, the internal pressures generated by African citizens themselves against their authoritarian rulers. I will rely heavily here on the masterful synthesis of *Democratic Experiments in Africa* by Michael Bratton and Nick van de Walle, who developed a prototypical succession of steps seen in country after country between 1989 and 1994.
  - A. The preconditions are the economic crisis surveyed in our last lecture and the generalized, deepening crisis of legitimacy facing African rulers as the 1980s progressed. People had simply lost faith that their leaders could solve their problems or offer them a better life or were even much trying: *They are living high on the hog while we suffer.*
  - B. Widespread popular protests broke out, mainly over economic grievances, above all, the erosion of purchasing power.
    - 1. Students shut down universities over bursaries that left them literally hungry; trade unions and civil servants struck over pay holdups and freezes; market women demonstrated over imposed price freezes.
    - 2. Almost entirely, the protests were urban rather than rural in base.
  - C. Authoritarian rulers responded in the usual fashion, which I would characterize as *crack down* and/or *buy off*. But the critical difference this time around was that the constricted economy limited the resources with which they could do either. The protests did not abate.
  - D. Instead, they took on an increasingly political character. People—again, often inspired by the sense of possibility that the international context offered—began to fashion genuine visions of alternatives. At a minimum, and most importantly, this meant an end to political monopolies, either one-party or military rule.
  - E. The next step in the developing dialectic was political liberalization by the rulers: End the government monopoly of all media and allow the discussion of a return to multiparty competition. We can control and limit the process and palliate the dissension.
  - F. The opposition took due advantage of the opening, often by organizing the ubiquitous national conference. Often presided over by unassailable figures—religious leaders, for instance—these conferences actually drafted alternative constitutions and sometimes even declared themselves sovereign!

**IV.** At this point, we should step back and return to the international context.

- A. With the end of the Cold War, African leaders could no longer proclaim their Marxism-Leninism or their anticommunism and expect aid from one side or the other.
- B. With the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, assistance from the West became, essentially, the only game in town. Thus, the SAPs of the IMF/World Bank, which we encountered in the last lecture, loomed that much larger.
- C. On the surface, it's slightly hard to believe that the policymakers of the IMF and World Bank, on the one hand, and struggling urban Africans, on the other, would share an agenda, but in some respects, they did. The donors were concerned about the sheer inefficiency of corrupt, closed regimes, a concern that meshed with the yearnings of "the people."
- D. Thus, various degrees of political conditionality were increasingly a part of SAP packages—hold multiparty elections, allow independent media, and so on.
- E. That said, Bratton and van de Walle conclude, and I agree, that these international pressures, though important, were secondary to the domestic ones.

**V.** In any case, all over Africa, one-party and military regimes conceded the inevitability of multiparty elections, which were duly held. This period was the high tide of the democratization movements; after this period, things become less clear.

**VI.** I will again illustrate from my first love, Zambia.

- A. By the late 1980s, Zambia was, to be blunt, a mess, an economic basket case. People were fed up with Kaunda's regime; a nice man, perhaps, but they had had it.
- B. True to the model, protests erupted, especially food riots when subsidies were removed on staples. Kaunda was able to repulse a coup attempt.
- C. Heavily dependent on foreign assistance at this point, Kaunda had little choice but to listen to Western encouragement of liberalization—including that from his friend Jimmy Carter.
- D. The opposition coalesced around the perfectly named Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), led by the diminutive trade unionist Frederick Chiluba.
- E. In 1991, elections were held. Kaunda, rather like Mugabe in Zimbabwe a decade later (about which we will hear more in Lecture Thirty-Five), was shocked when the people rejected him after 27 years, electing Chiluba president by a margin of four to one.
- F. To his everlasting credit, Kaunda accepted the verdict and went gracefully. In fact, his stock has resurged more recently, as the replacement proved far more corrupt than the incumbent.

**VII.** Some might say that the "democratic moment" came—and went.

- A. To be sure, this "revolution of rising expectations," like the first one at independence, has met much disappointment.
  1. Some leaders held on to power, manipulating the very reforms they permitted.
  2. In other cases, once in power, the new leaders, like Chiluba, proved worse than the old.
- B. Still, there is virtually not a single official one-party state or military government in Africa. In such places as Zambia, people and parties compete for power with a tolerance unthinkable a short time ago. People are less likely to acquiesce in corruption and misrule, and I doubt they will go back.

**Suggested Reading:**

Michael Bratton and Nick van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Do you think the democratic resurgence of the late 1980s/early 1990s in Africa would have occurred, could have occurred, without the equally dramatic democratizations elsewhere, such as the collapse of the Soviet bloc?
2. Has there been a paradigm shift in Africa's political culture, or have the basic problems merely been papered over? Are we likely to see one-party states or military regimes again?

## Lecture Thirty-Two

### The South African Miracle

**Scope:** If any country, anywhere, saw a democratic breakthrough stunning enough to rival the Soviet Union's, it was South Africa. In the 1960s–1980s, even with African nationalist movements outlawed, their leaders imprisoned or exiled, and the white Afrikaner leadership exuding confidence, the cracks in apartheid's foundation gradually widened. We examine the martyred Steve Biko's Black Consciousness movement, the Soweto schoolchildren's revolt of 1976, a halting guerilla war, and the growing international pressure in the form of sanctions. In the mid-1980s, South Africa seemed destined for a future of unending low-level turmoil, à la Israel/Palestine. Then, no less than Nelson Mandela, from behind bars, began to find common ground with a new generation of realists within the ruling camp. The end result has rightly been termed a miracle—a negotiated transition to genuine majority rule, with stability and economic growth.

### Outline

- I. There were many remarkable stories of democratic transition in the late 1980s and early 1990s—the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, in Latin America, in several countries in Africa—but it's hard to top South Africa. In 1990, Nelson Mandela was in prison, and no black South African could vote. Four years later, he was elected president of the nation.
- II. When last we focused on South Africa, we ended by noting that in the late 1960s and early 1970s, apartheid appeared to be in the saddle.
  - A. The active opposition had been silenced, with Mandela jailed for life and his and other movements banned, operating in exile if at all.
  - B. The government was pursuing its grand apartheid scheme of separate development, and the white population was prospering.
  - C. But beneath the surface, trouble was brewing for the rulers.
- III. A number of key factors and a number of key steps led to South Africa's transformation. Let us examine them in turn.
  - A. The quiet of the late 1960s and early 1970s was deceptive. Black anger never diminished but needed channeling in place of resignation.
    - 1. A crucial development, especially among the younger black population, was the movement usually called *Black Consciousness*.
    - 2. In many respects, it was, first and foremost, a psychological movement: It called on black South Africans to “free their minds first”—to utterly reject the notions of inferiority the system handed them and to respect and take pride in themselves and their capacity to change things.
    - 3. The preeminent spokesman for the movement was a brilliant and charismatic medical student, Steve Biko. Constantly harassed by the authorities, Biko, with his biting, incisive analyses and steadfast humor, struck a chord with many, particularly the young.
  - B. In 1976, the cocksure government made a classic blunder: It ordered that certain subjects be taught in Afrikaans in secondary schools.
    - 1. Many objected on many grounds, but to the black students, this order was tantamount to having the “language of the oppressor” crammed down their throats.
    - 2. The outrage led students in Soweto, South Africa's biggest township, to organize a rally and march—large but peaceful.
    - 3. The police responded, as they had at Sharpeville in 1960, with gunfire. But this time, it was not a one-off affair: In the days, weeks, and months to come, the conflagration spread throughout South Africa. Police battled defiant students, hundreds if not thousands were killed, and townships were in flames.

- 4. Something like order returned, but a bit more than a year later, Steve Biko was arrested at a roadblock. In the next several days, he was essentially murdered by the security forces. South Africa erupted again.
- 5. We have spoken before of watersheds and turning points and periods. For my money, 1976 marks a watershed: From that date, it was a matter of when, not if, the apartheid system would fall.
- C. Meanwhile, the African National Congress had been intensifying its military campaign against the regime, directed from abroad from bases in Zambia, Angola, and Tanzania.
  - 1. Many young people from the “generation of ‘76” slipped across the borders and revitalized the guerilla forces. And they began to slip back, organizing attacks on police stations, the Air Force headquarters, and other targets.
  - 2. This was important; however, at no time did the ANC have the strictly military capacity to, say, ride into Pretoria in tanks as the North Vietnamese/Viet Cong did in Vietnam.
- D. More important, in my view, was a state of civil insurrection, driven by young comrades, youth activists. “Make the townships ungovernable,” the ANC had called for from abroad, and indeed, this is what happened, though hardly at the ANC’s specific direction. The comrades had developed a momentum of their own.
- E. The 1980s can be viewed as the decade of “neo-apartheid,” symbolized by the country’s penultimate white leader, P. W. Botha.
  - 1. Botha initiated a series of cautious reforms, including elimination of passes (identity booklets).
  - 2. His constitutional reforms of 1983 ended the exclusively white parliaments but replaced them with a plan that still excluded 75% of the population.
- F. South Africa had always depended on black labor.
  - 1. Another reform initiated by Botha included legalizing black labor unions in the hope of controlling them.
  - 2. The plan backfired, and the labor movement increasingly added its enormous weight to the tide of dissent.
- G. Finally, the international community stepped up the pressure on South Africa. “Sanctions”—boycotts, withdrawal of investment, denial of capital—all began to take a toll.
- H. In summary, four factors coalesced in the 1980s and brought about the changes that began to unfold in South Africa:
  - 1. A low-level guerilla war.
  - 2. A state of civil insurrection in and around the townships.
  - 3. Increasing exhibition of the power of trade unionists.
  - 4. International sanctions.

**IV.** All this turmoil began to convince certain figures in the inner circle of South African power—rather like it had in the old Soviet Union—that the system could not go on like this. They began to advocate reaching out and forging some sort of compromise. And who better to seek out than the symbol of the opposition, Mandela?

- A. For his part, Mandela was thinking along the same lines: better gain without war than war without gain. He cultivated several reformist figures inside the power structure from inside his different and more conducive prison environs.
- B. Botha, shortly after inviting Mandela to tea in 1989, had a stroke and was replaced by F. W. de Klerk, precisely one of the reformists we mentioned.
- C. In his unforgettable speech of February 1990, de Klerk freed Mandela, legalized all political parties, and forever changed South African politics.
- D. It is important to realize that Mandela took a very considerable risk by initiating and responding to possibilities of negotiation. Many in the ANC opposed this course, and it is quite conceivable that Mandela might have wound up marginalized in the whole story.

**V.** South Africa was hardly out of the woods. There ensued an incredibly tense and, indeed, very violent period preceding general elections in April 1994. As the whole world knows, with most South Africans voting for the first time, Mandela and his party, the ANC, came to power.

**VI.** Since then, though beset by numerous and significant problems, South Africa has, among other things, enjoyed basic stability, more open and peaceful elections, and positive economic growth. There are those who scoff at the term “South African miracle.” I don’t. If you want an alternative possibility, consider Israel and Palestine.

**Suggested Reading:**

Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, parts 8–11.

Allister Sparks. *Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa*.

Allister Sparks, *Tomorrow Is Another Country: The Inside Story of South Africa’s Road to Change*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How would you compare the ending of apartheid in South Africa with the ending of segregation in the United States?
2. Was South Africa’s transition bound to happen anyway, or were the roles played by Mandela and de Klerk absolutely crucial?

## Lecture Thirty-Three

### The Unthinkable—The Rwanda Genocide

**Scope:** In the same year, the same *month*, that Mandela’s election marked a triumph for freedom and justice everywhere, a nightmare unfolded in the East African country of Rwanda. After the president was killed in an unexplained plane crash, Hutu radicals initiated a furious attempt at a “final solution”: the extermination of the minority Tutsi ethnic group. At least 500,000 Tutsi were murdered—along with a number of moderate Hutu—in a wave of hand-to-hand, neighbor-to-neighbor killings that redefine the word *horror*. In this lecture, we step back to review Rwanda’s precolonial and colonial history in an attempt to grope toward an “explanation” of an event that remains, essentially, inexplicable.

### Outline

- I. In April 1994, exactly three weeks before Nelson Mandela was elected president of South Africa, a plane carrying the president of Rwanda was shot down, killing him; within hours began the biggest genocide the world has seen since the Jewish Holocaust. As the Nigerian writer and Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka said a bit later, “South Africa is our dream; Rwanda our nightmare.”
- II. Media coverage of Rwanda in 1994 vividly pronounced it a “tribal bloodbath,” a bursting forth of the “ancient hatreds” between the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi.
  - A. There is some truth in this—it was certainly a bloodbath, and ethnicity was certainly a crucial aspect.
  - B. But the media reaction is a classic example of oversimplification based on flawed assumptions. Several more recent media productions, including some feature-length films, provide far richer understanding.
- III. Historically, who *are* the Hutu and Tutsi?
  - A. Hutu refers to the original Iron Age Bantu farming and herding peoples of the mountainous region of today’s Rwanda, Burundi, and eastern Congo.
  - B. And what about the Tutsi? Beginning several centuries ago, migrants began to enter the region as well, mostly from the north and east. There was not a single “great migration” of “Hamitic” or even “Semitic” peoples (read: less “Negro”) from far to the north, as many accounts have it, but a number of migrant streams over a considerable period, interacting in complex ways with the original population.
  - C. Still, it is fair to say that the term *Tutsi* originates with these newcomers who, in some cases, were able to establish power over the older indigenes and who tended to hold substantial wealth in cattle. The nearest translation of *Tutsi* in English turns out to be “aristocracy,” suggesting a class rather than a narrowly ethnic status.
  - D. In my early lecture on ethnicity, I emphasized that ethnic identity is fluid, changeable, a matter of self-perception and perception by others. I stated that language difference is probably the best single criterion for determining “ethnic difference” in Africa but hastened to add that no single criterion is 100 percent reliable. And here is your proof: Hutu and Tutsi, parties to the deadliest ethnic violence in Africa’s history, speak the same language, Kinyarwanda.
  - E. Several kingdoms emerged in this region, and the rulers were Tutsi.
    - 1. And there was inequality, though it tended to be a linked rather than strict caste inequality; cattle-holders (mostly Tutsi) had clients (mostly Hutu).
    - 2. But there was also considerable intermarriage, including with royalty. Some people whose ancestry was at least partly Hutu “became,” and were accepted as, Tutsi.
    - 3. And there was conflict, not between Tutsi and Hutu but between kingdoms composed of both.
  - F. Eventually, two principal kingdoms emerged, each with very similar ethnic makeups: Rwanda to the north and neighboring Burundi, to the south.
  - G. Physically, the stereotype (held also by many Rwandans) has been tall, slender Tutsi and shorter, squat Hutu. But reality confounds this as often as it confirms it: Even the Hutu murderers of 1994 often had to look at identification cards before deciding whom to kill.

**IV.** Rwanda and Burundi were originally colonized by Germany, but Belgium took them over after World War I. Both, but especially the Belgians, found it useful to view the Tutsi as “natural aristocrats,” and both favored and depended upon them.

- A. Almost all the officially recognized chiefs were Tutsi.
- B. The Catholic Church, which dominated the education system, similarly favored Tutsi, who became the principal members of a new kind of literate, Western-educated elite.
- C. The Belgian bureaucracy also “froze” ethnic identity in a sense, symbolized by the issuing of identity cards bearing a Hutu or Tutsi designation.
- D. Inequality, then, was greatly sharpened, as was, not surprisingly, Hutu resentment.

**V.** In the 1950s, as in most colonies, it was the educated elite, largely Tutsi, that began to clamor for self-government.

- A. But some Hutu—seizing the moment of colonial twilight, perhaps—issued their own Hutu Manifesto in 1957. Anti-Tutsi riots, called the Hutu Social Revolution, broke out in 1959.
- B. The Belgians did something of an about-face at this last minute (see Lecture Twenty-Five on the Belgian Congo) and began favoring the Hutu. In elections leading to independence in 1962, a Hutu-dominated government came to power.
- C. All of this is not to “blame” the Belgian colonialists for 1994, which is a gross reach, but this context cannot be ignored.

**VI.** Uncertainties over what independence would bring exacerbated tensions, and as the postcolonial era progressed, these tensions did not diminish.

- A. From 1959–1963, early anti-Tutsi moves and smaller-scale pogroms propelled the first waves of Tutsi going into exile, mainly in Uganda, where some eventually organized militarily, forming the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).
- B. By the 1970s, Rwanda was in the sort of tailspin we described in Lectures Twenty-Nine and Thirty: declining terms of trade, unfulfilled expectations. In Burundi, there were mass killings of Hutu by Tutsi, sending great numbers of Hutu refugees into Rwanda. President Habyarimana seized power in Rwanda in a coup in 1973 and held it for 21 years.
- C. Within Hutu inner circles, there developed moderate and extremist factions with regard to the Tutsi “problem.”
- D. In October 1990, northern Rwanda was invaded by Tutsi-led RPF exiles. Indeed, from that time until 1994, Rwanda was in a state of civil war.
- E. In October 1993, the first Hutu president of Burundi was assassinated, apparently by the Tutsi-dominated army.
- F. In Rwanda, President Habyarimana had been somewhat on the fence between the moderates and extremists but was returning from a peace conference with Tutsi exiles on April 6, 1994, when he was killed. No one is sure who assassinated him.
  - 1. Some say he was killed by RPF forces.
  - 2. Others believe he was killed by Hutu extremists, who had settled on plans quite different from peace initiatives.

**VII.** Claiming Tutsi had murdered President Habyarimana, the Hutu extremists seized power and launched what we now know was a well-prepared and coordinated plan for a “final solution”—the elimination of the Tutsi population once and for all.

- A. Some of their earliest targets, however, were not Tutsi but Hutu moderates—and there were many of them—who refused to countenance such a slaughter.
- B. The army carried out many operations, but in the “swamps”—as the killing grounds were called—it was usually the Interahamwe, the ragtag Hutu militias, who took care of the “cockroaches,” as the Tutsi came to be called.
- C. And some neighbors, it is true, killed neighbors; others courageously protected them.
- D. The world, despite considerable intelligence before and after April 6, essentially did nothing.

1. The UN force, which was *reduced* as the crisis deepened, was pathetically inadequate.
2. In hindsight, the inaction is unforgivable. At the time, an intervention might have been labeled “imperialism” in some quarters, including those most critical of the inaction.

E. Rather incredibly, the genocide ended—after 700,000 deaths—with an invasion in July 1994 by Tutsi-led RPF exiles.

F. But some 2 million Hutu refugees, including many *génocidaires*, fled into eastern Congo. The ensuing destabilization there contributed to Mobutu’s downfall and is part of the ongoing greater-Great-Lakes conflagration that has devastated the region.

**VIII.** In Rwanda, some sort of basic stability has been restored, which is remarkable enough. And there have been serious efforts to deal with the genocide and its aftermath.

- A. A UN-sponsored International Criminal Tribunal operating in Tanzania has brought and is bringing criminal cases against the chief organizers of the killings.
- B. Internally, there have also been prosecutions. But there remain today tens of thousands of suspects held in facilities like stadiums. This is a source of tension in itself.
- C. Perhaps most promising have been grassroots initiatives in local communities, efforts to reach some sort of accounting and tolerance, if not reconciliation.

**IX.** A confession: I cannot explain the Rwanda genocide. I can barely comprehend it. But I hope this background helps build a clearer view.

**Suggested Reading:**

Alison Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story”: *Genocide in Rwanda*.

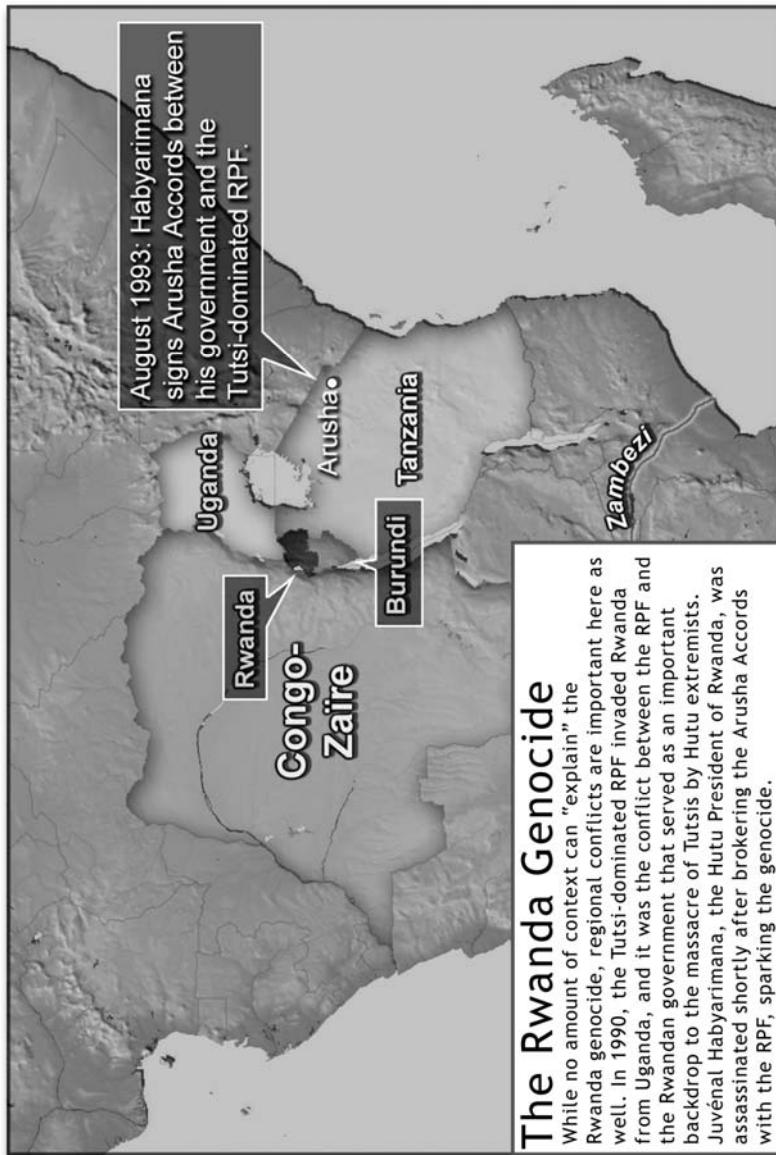
Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*.

Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*.

André Sibomana, *Hope for Rwanda: Conversations with Laure Guibert and Hervé Deguine*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How and why did the Hutu/Tutsi divide sharpen during the colonial period?
2. What explains the outside world’s inaction, even as the scale of the Rwanda genocide became known?



### The Rwanda Genocide

While no amount of context can "explain" the Rwanda genocide, regional conflicts are important here as well. In 1990, the Tutsi-dominated RPF invaded Rwanda from Uganda, and it was the conflict between the RPF and the Rwandan government that served as an important backdrop to the massacre of Tutsis by Hutu extremists. Juvénal Habyarimana, the Hutu President of Rwanda, was assassinated shortly after brokered the Arusha Accords with the RPF, sparking the genocide.

## Lecture Thirty-Four

### The New Plague—HIV/AIDS in Africa

**Scope:** Disease has, of course, played a major role in human history, from bubonic plague in medieval Europe to the post-Columbian catastrophe that befell Native American populations. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, a new disaster developed—AIDS. It emerged first in Central Africa, and we investigate the quite different theses about its origins, including the possibility that Western-sponsored vaccine testing went horrifically awry. Although AIDS threatens populations all over the world, Africa suffers most, by several orders of magnitude. We examine the social and economic impact of a malady that mostly affects people in their prime, including the orphaning of multitudes of children. We look at the curious, some say bizarre, reaction of South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki, which has surely cost his country time—and lives. But we counter with the cases of Senegal and Uganda, where determined and effective efforts have rolled back the pandemic.

### Outline

- I. Disease has been a major factor in human history, and we know a lot more about this than we used to. We have encountered it at several junctures already in this course, as a partial explanation for the turn to African labor in the Americas or as a further blow to Khoisan populations already reeling from Dutch pressure in the Cape Colony.
- II. The diseases common in Africa for a long time, such as malaria, yellow fever, and river blindness, are factors that have plausibly contributed to Africa's relatively low population growth and lack of economic development. More recently discovered diseases, such as Ebola or Marburg fever, are horrifying in their effects but, thus far, have had little widespread effect.
- III. Not so, unfortunately, for another recent arrival, HIV/AIDS (*HIV* stands for human immunodeficiency virus, which leads to *AIDS*—acquired immune deficiency syndrome).
  - A. AIDS is a global phenomenon—a pandemic—but it has already had an incomparably greater impact on Africa than anywhere else, and even if today, everything that *could* be done to counteract it *were* to be done, it would still have major effects for decades to come.
  - B. The statistics are staggering.
    - 1. In 2005, the total was approaching 30 million deaths from AIDS worldwide, and something like 80 percent of those have occurred in Africa.
    - 2. In every region of Africa, the percentage of adults who are HIV-positive is at least 5 percent (compare with a U.S. rate of less than 1 percent). The lowest rates in Africa are in West and North Africa; they are higher in Central and East Africa.
    - 3. The epicenter of the pandemic is Southern Africa, with the highest rates by far in the world. Botswana's is more than 30 percent; Zimbabwe's, not much less. The country with the largest absolute number of HIV-positive adults is the Republic of South Africa.
- IV. AIDS was first identified in the United States in the early 1980s, but almost certainly it originated in Central Africa. Almost all authorities agree that HIV “jumped” from simians—especially chimpanzees—to humans, but how the jump occurred is not clear.
  - A. One possibility, caricatured as the “cut African” or “bushmeat” theory, suggests that there was an accidental blood transfer to humans from simians in Central Africa, where indeed, these animals are occasionally slaughtered for food. (In other parts of Africa, they are quite taboo.)
  - B. In 1999, Edward Hooper published a massive book, *The River*, that suggested but did not prove (nor did Hooper claim that it proved) that HIV may have been introduced to humans when some 1 million people in the Belgian Congo were given trial doses of oral polio vaccine in the late 1950s.
    - 1. The vaccine used in the trials, sponsored by Western scientists, was developed using chimpanzee tissue.

2. Hooper is not a crackpot; he is a former UN official and BBC reporter. His theory remains unproven but continues to provoke controversy. At the very least, quite apart from AIDS, it raises troubling questions about drug trials in African and other Third World populations.

V. Why has HIV/AIDS spread so much faster in Africa? What are the manifestations—social, economic, even political—of its impact?

- A. AIDS almost surely was around in Africa well before it was identified in the early 1980s. Thus, it had a kind of “rolling start,” making it more difficult to reverse.
- B. One reason for the delay in identifying AIDS, of course, is that it is a secondary infection, like pneumonia, which sickens and finally kills. This fact can still lead people to avoid accepting that AIDS is/was the key problem.
- C. HIV/AIDS is spread through sexual contact and/or exchange of bodily fluids, especially blood. In the United States, AIDS was concentrated, at first, in the homosexual community and among intravenous drug users. In Africa, on the other hand, it has spread almost entirely through heterosexual activity, which obviously involves a far greater number of people.
  1. Some quickly assume that promiscuity, especially of African males, is the problem. I personally have great doubt that a tendency toward promiscuity is any more pronounced in Africa than elsewhere (though it is fair to add that some articulate African women have had harsh words for men).
  2. Better explanations have to do with labor migration and poverty.
    - a. When one spouse, usually the male, goes away to work for a substantial time, it doesn’t take notions of “natural” or “cultural” predispositions toward promiscuity to posit that this creates an atmosphere that facilitates multiple sexual partners. Labor migration is a deeply ingrained pattern, especially in Southern Africa, as we have seen.
    - b. Poverty, limiting access to health care and health education, can result in higher rates of other sexually transmitted diseases—and this raises the likelihood of transmission of HIV. Poverty can also make condom use prohibitively expensive, though there is evidence of cultural resistance to their use as well.
  3. In addition, women are unlikely to have as much access to education or the means to negotiate safe sexual relationships with men. Likewise, poor young girls sometimes see a relationship with an older man as a way to escape poverty.
- D. The AIDS pandemic can be deceptive. The visitor to Southern Africa is not going to encounter writhing, hemorrhaging bodies on the streets. The sad truth is that people withdraw to back rooms and dark huts and waste away.
- E. The impact of their withdrawal, and eventual loss, affects almost everything.
  1. A great many of the victims are in their most productive years—20s, 30s, and 40s. The cost of their loss to the workforce—and AIDS strikes the skilled and educated workforce as well as the impoverished—is obvious. Institutions such as those involved in education are directly affected by the loss of teachers.
  2. Food security is a subject not to be taken lightly in Africa. Sick people cannot work fields.
  3. When adults in the age groups mentioned die, they often leave children. AIDS orphans are a real, huge, and growing problem; some say there are now 15 million. These may be the AIDS victims you’ll see sleeping in the street, leaping out to “watch your car” when you park.

VI. What hope is there?

- A. Antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) can radically improve and extend an AIDS patient’s life; indeed, the disease is no longer necessarily fatal at all. In Africa, the problem is cost; however, there have recently been breakthroughs here, with drug companies permitting generics with a far lower price.
- B. But the key, obviously, is public education. It is popularizing knowledge of the causes of HIV/AIDS and how to prevent it; it is overcoming the stigma of AIDS, which still leads many people to avoid the subject.
- C. The role of leadership—*public* leadership—by those at the top, seems to be critical.
  1. This is what has made the statements and policies of South African President Thabo Mbeki so troubling. Mbeki, a gifted and intelligent man, was openly skeptical that HIV causes AIDS. Though he has rather reluctantly changed course, precious time has been lost.

2. His predecessor, the living legend Mandela, on the other hand, has increasingly used his “retirement” to tirelessly publicize AIDS awareness.
3. The most successful cases of rolling back the pandemic have occurred in Senegal and Uganda, again through aggressive and clever public education. The positive personal role of Ugandan President Museveni, for instance, has been critical.

**Suggested Reading:**

Susan Hunter, *Black Death: AIDS in Africa*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What factors explain why Africa has become the epicenter of the world HIV/AIDS pandemic?
2. What are the *indirect* effects of HIV/AIDS in Africa—the effects on people who are *not* infected, on society as a whole?

## Lecture Thirty-Five

### Zimbabwe—Background to Contemporary Crisis

**Scope:** In recent years, no African country has received more attention in the West than Zimbabwe. President Robert Mugabe, the national hero of the independence struggle against white minority rule, has now been in power for a quarter-century. For much of that time, this beautiful land seemed a beacon of stability, relative prosperity—Zimbabwe regularly exported food to its needy neighbors—and racial reconciliation. Nonetheless, many Zimbabweans grew restive under Mugabe’s lengthy tenure, increasing corruption, and authoritarian rule. When the populace rejected in referendum his proposed new constitution, and then nearly ended the ruling party’s control of parliament, Mugabe reacted furiously. He seized remaining white-owned farms and cracked down ever more harshly on the opposition. The result—in the short run at least—has been economic decline, widespread hunger, and dispiriting conjecture about just where “the jewel of Africa” is headed.

### Outline

- I.** Since about the year 2000, no African country—not even South Africa—has received more attention than Zimbabwe in Western media. It may be worth pondering why this should be so. The word *crisis* is perhaps overly used with regard to Africa, but I have no hesitation in applying it to Zimbabwe today. In this lecture, we seek a fuller understanding of this situation.
- II.** Let’s begin by reviewing briefly some aspects of Zimbabwe’s history that we encountered in previous lectures.
  - A.** Named for magnificent stone ruins at the center of an old empire, modern Zimbabwe was originally, of course, the British colony of Southern Rhodesia, founded by and named for Cecil Rhodes.
    1. Southern Rhodesia was a settler colony. Though never more than 4 percent of the total population, whites were numerous enough to enjoy settler self-government within the British Empire.
    2. The hallmark of settler colonies was expropriation of African land. In Southern Rhodesia, about half—the better half—of the total arable land was held by several thousand European farmers.
  - B.** Shortly after the Central African Federation broke apart in 1963, the white settlers decided to buck the tide of African nationalism and, in 1965, unilaterally declared the country independent of Britain under the leadership of Ian Smith.
    1. The Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), in turn, led African nationalists to take up arms. A bloody war raged through the 1970s; eventually, negotiations led to an open election in 1980.
    2. The election brought to power Robert Gabriel Mugabe and his party—formerly one of the liberation movements—the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF).
- III.** Mugabe is, in many respects, a brilliant and remarkable character.
  - A.** A devout Catholic, the idealistic young Mugabe went to Nkrumah’s Ghana to teach school. He married a Ghanaian woman, who became independent Zimbabwe’s first “mother of the nation.”
  - B.** Returning to Rhodesia (the “Southern” was dropped when Northern Rhodesia became Zambia), Mugabe became active with ZANU. He was imprisoned by the settler regime in the mid-1960s and spent the next decade there in one of Smith’s prisons.
  - C.** Mugabe’s intelligence and intellectual bent are shown by his successful completion of graduate degrees through correspondence while in prison. He became an articulate advocate of Marxian revolution but never abandoned his pragmatism.
  - D.** Released as part of an abortive peace initiative in 1975, Mugabe escaped to Mozambique, where he quickly rose to become director of ZANU’s guerilla movement.
- IV.** Mugabe’s first decade in power (the 1980s) saw some most impressive achievements and some ominous signs.
  - A.** He had come to power fueled by popular resentment of white domination (some trace this to his bitter prison experience, including the denial of permission to attend the funeral of his deceased child) and, perhaps above all, resentment of the white control of so much land. On the other hand, the white farms,

employing large numbers of black workers, were enormously productive, not only of foodstuffs but of Zimbabwe's leading export and earner of foreign exchange—tobacco.

1. Mugabe chose neither radical redistribution of white-owned land nor preservation of the status quo but a middle course that saw some cautious resettlement of land-poor Africans, while maintaining the economic advantages generated by the large white commercial farms.
2. He also extended many services to African peasant farmers who did not get more land—services largely denied to them under the old regime, such as extension advice, hybrid seed, fertilizer subsidy, improved transport, and full and prompt payment.
3. The result was a nation that not only fed itself, with major input from both farming sectors, but regularly exported to its needful neighbors.

B. The country showed positive growth rates while achieving remarkable advances in health and, especially, education at all levels.

C. But Mugabe showed his iron fist by unleashing the notorious North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade to crush so-called “dissidents” in the ethnically Ndebele-dominated southwestern part of the country. Nonetheless, by decade's end, he had lured the predominantly Ndebele ZAPU party (his old rivals) into his government and muted his call for an official one-party state.

D. Most troubling to many was the increasingly brazen corruption of the elite, symbolized by the 1989 “Willowgate” scandal involving access to state-controlled cars. The hugely popular singer and musical hero of the liberation war, Thomas Mapfumo, hit a nerve with his English-language hit of 1989, “Corruption.”

V. By the mid-1990s, Zimbabwe was still a place that largely *worked*—more than could be said for a number of places elsewhere. But the negative trends accelerated.

- A. Employment was shrinking, and prices were rising. In the urban areas, especially, there was increasingly open discontent.
- B. Corruption burgeoned. Mugabe funded the lavish lifestyle of his second wife, his former secretary, 40 years his junior, who was fond of flying on air force jets to Paris or Hong Kong for shopping sprees.
- C. Mugabe and his party's willingness to use heavy-handed intimidation continued unabated. In the late 1990s, he proposed a new constitution further entrenching the ruling party's power, confident he was still the hero of the people.

VI. The result of a referendum on the constitution, in early 2000, was a shock: 55 percent voted no. A few months later, despite every kind of intimidation and pro-ZANU saturation by the state-owned media, the opposition, crystallized as the Movement for Democratic Change, nearly won more seats in parliament than ZANU.

VII. Mugabe reacted with fury and played what can only be called the land card.

- A. Crowds of young men, so-called “war veterans,” though most were barely born when the liberation war was fought, began to occupy white farms. Eventually, most of the white farmers were evicted; some were beaten, and a few killed. Physically, it was black farm workers who suffered most.
- B. The young men were largely party thugs, recruited from the desperate urban youth, and, through no fault of their own, not experienced farmers. Often, the re-expropriated farms did not even wind up in their hands—let alone those of land-hungry peasants—but in the possession of the well-connected elite.
- C. Predictably, at least for the short run, the economy crashed, by every measure. The former breadbasket of Africa became, by 2005, one of Africa's hungriest countries.
- D. In 2005, the government launched a clearing operation against the squatter settlements, supposedly to clean up hotbeds of crime and disease. However, the targets were often hotbeds of opposition to the ZANU government. The plan was called “Operation Murumbatsvina”—“Operation Drive Out the Trash.”

VIII. Mugabe seemed quite blasé about his nation's problems.

- A. He attributed all opposition and criticism to whites and imperialists, especially Britain and the United States.
- B. He and ZANU stay smugly in power, returned in highly dubious elections in 2002 and 2005.

C. Nonetheless, as my best Zimbabwean friend once put it, “There are a lot of brave people in this country,” and they may yet prevail.

**Suggested Reading:**

Andrew Meldrum, *Where We Have Hope: A Memoir of Zimbabwe*.

Martin Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What explains Mugabe’s policies on land redistribution after independence in 1980, and what explains his abrupt shift from 2000 forward?
2. Historically, South Africa had an even more racially skewed land distribution than Zimbabwe; is it conceivable that South Africa will follow Zimbabwe’s lead?

## Lecture Thirty-Six

### Africa Found

**Scope:** We conclude the course with a brief overview of some of the main themes: struggles with the environment, ethnic identity, statebuilding, and the constantly evolving interface between Africa and the outside world. We offer a sober assessment of contemporary Africa. Is the glass half-empty or half-full? Is talk of an “African Renaissance” empty rhetoric? With a very large dose of caution, we present some examples that may offer hope: ordinary (and some extraordinary) men and women showing courage, sacrifice, entrepreneurship, innovation, and vision.

### Outline

- I.** So we come to the end of our journey. In this lecture we are going to do three things.
  - A.** First, we will review and summarize some of the critical themes of the course.
  - B.** We will then assess Africa in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
  - C.** We will conclude with some profiles of people who, in the recent past, have made some impressive contributions to progress in Africa.
- II.** So let’s review briefly some of the main topics we’ve covered.
  - A.** Physically, Africa comprises numerous quite different environments. It can be an achingly beautiful place but has never been an easy place. Its soils are relatively weak, its rainfall is limited, and its disease environment is dangerous.
  - B.** Humankind emerged in Africa in several different stages; the rest of the world was populated out of Africa. The fundamental things that make us human developed here.
  - C.** People originally lived directly off the environment and transformed it but little. That changed dramatically as agriculture and iron resulted in much higher population and settled life.
  - D.** African communities developed distinctive social relations, religious systems, and political institutions.
    - 1.** We have been at some pains to gain a subtler understanding of ethnic identity and have examined its importance and its fluid nature at numerous junctures.
    - 2.** We have looked at the emergence of major states, kingdoms, and empires—the fundamental units of the African political past—in many different settings.
  - E.** Africa’s “isolation” has frequently been exaggerated.
    - 1.** Quite early on, we saw evidence of contact—especially commercial contact—for instance, across the Sahara or the Indian Ocean.
    - 2.** We also studied religious contact, particularly the impact of Christianity and Islam in Africa, and we saw that there has always been a good deal of syncretism, the combination of these outside religions and much older spiritual ideas.
  - F.** Still, we reached a turning point in Africa’s relation to the outside world some 500 years ago, as Western European powers began to drive a global mercantile capitalist system.
    - 1.** An important subdynamic of this phenomenon was West Africa’s emergence as the primary source of slaves for the New World. This slave trade meant the loss of millions of persons to West Africa—either killed in the operation of the trade or exported across the Atlantic, where they were crucial in the transformation of the Americas.
    - 2.** Another subdynamic was the origin of modern South Africa, the continent’s most developed and powerful nation and one comparable at many historical points with the United States.
  - G.** Eventually, Africa’s relation with Europe took another dramatic turn with the scramble for Africa—the carving of the continent into European empires, a century or more ago.
    - 1.** The basic national units of today’s Africa—African countries—were created then and are still with us, the only exception being the creation of Eritrea in 1993 out of the country of Ethiopia.
    - 2.** Economically, African territories were made dependent on an export/import system, often monoeconomic, and this situation is still with us, too.

- 3. In some territories, significant numbers of European settlers came and took up land. They did not come only as missionaries or merchants or soldiers or government representatives.
- H. With great energy, Africans organized nationalist movements against the colonial powers. Eventually, they gained independence: earlier and more peacefully in nonsettler territories, later and with arms in settler ones.
  - I. And with great hopes and expectations, Africans entered the independence period. By and large, those expectations were disappointed, for reasons both internal and external.
    - 1. After impressive early gains in economic growth, education, and health care, the international economic climate turned inhospitable in the 1970s, and everything economic contracted.
    - 2. Politically, the continent has been plagued with continuing wars, authoritarian rule, and corruption.
    - 3. In the 1980s and 1990s, Africa's second period of democratization took place, with the conversion of South Africa to a democratic government being perhaps the most remarkable case of all.

### III. Where does that leave us at this point in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

- A. I refuse to be, and will never be, Pollyanna. I can make a good case, I believe, for a quite dismal African future.
  - 1. Where is the financial and social capital for genuine development going to come from? What is the realistic alternative to continued reliance on commodity exports—and what are the likely returns for those exports? Isn't Africa going to have to wait *another* epoch for its turn, as China and India bloom into developed powers?
  - 2. As if this weren't enough, what about HIV/AIDS? And what else is out there? Just staying alive is going to be challenge enough.
  - 3. As one corrupt leader shall be removed, so shall another be visited upon us. It's almost too easy to find examples.
- B. As you have probably guessed, that is not where my heart is. But professors are supposed to use their heads—and I think there is plenty of evidence to suggest the possibility of something, not perhaps so grand as an "African Renaissance," but something like measurable progress.
  - 1. The ideas of fundamental political accountability and basic political freedoms—to speak, to write, to organize—have, I think, become entrenched. In this sense, the democratic revival of the late 1980s and early 1990s, despite setbacks, has made a lasting mark. There are virtually no one-party states or military regimes on the continent.
  - 2. This change, in turn, is the key to exposing corruption and bringing it within tolerable limits.
  - 3. The idea of taking Africa's farmers—perhaps, especially, Africa's *women* farmers—seriously has also gained ground. On it depends long-range food security, a subject not to be taken lightly.
  - 4. In Uganda and Senegal, vigorous public education has begun to reverse even a calamity such as HIV/AIDS.
  - 5. Debt restructuring and debt relief for a dozen or more African nations has meant a fresh start for these countries.
  - 6. In the digital age, a case such as Ireland—where heavy investment in education for a new era has sparked a boom—might offer a model. What if such education were offered to Africa's young, and very often enthusiastic, learners?

### IV. I will end by offering some brief profiles of some people in Africa today who lead me to conclude the glass is half-full.

- A. Our first example is Hamilton Naki from South Africa.
  - 1. He worked at the University of Cape Town, first tending the grass around the tennis courts, then eventually assisting doctors in practicing surgery on animals. He became known for his ability to join tiny blood vessels with amazing delicacy and accuracy.
  - 2. In 1967, he worked with Christiaan Barnard, who performed the first heart transplant, even though at that time it was illegal for a black South African to be permitted in the surgical theater of a whites-only hospital.
  - 3. In 2003, he finally received a well-deserved honorary medical degree from the University of Cape Town. He died in May 2005.
- B. Emmanuel Akyeampong, born in Ghana, earned a doctorate in African history.

1. He is a professor of African history at Harvard. Akyeampong is not, however, symbolic of another phenomena taking place in poor countries: so-called “brain drain.”
2. His family still lives in Ghana, and he has worked to develop the African Public Broadcasting Foundation, similar to our Public Broadcasting Corporation, so that news, education, and information can be mixed with entertainment and reach the masses continent-wide.

C. Erik Charas from Mozambique graduated with a degree in electrical engineering from the University of Cape Town.

1. He has developed an original and practical solution to a basic human health problem: the tragedy of 3 million children who die each year of vaccine-preventable diseases because the vaccines cannot be kept cold before they are injected.
2. His propane-driven refrigerators keep vaccines cool in rural areas where no electricity is available.

D. Finally, we have Wangari Maathai from Kenya, who received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in the United States and her Ph.D. in Veterinary Anatomy from the University of Nairobi, the first East African woman to gain a Ph.D. there.

1. She worked on behalf of rural Kenyan women and started the Green Belt Movement to plant trees in Kenya and maintain the biodiversity of the land and conserve water. So far, 30 million trees have been planted in Kenya alone.
2. She persevered despite conflict with plantation owners and Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi and is now the Assistant Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Wildlife in Kenya.
3. She has spoken out on the disproportionate number of women with HIV/AIDS and against female genital mutilation. In 2004, this remarkable Kenyan woman won the Nobel Peace Prize.

V. One final thought: Thirty years ago, I got hooked on Africa and its history after going there. I am not unique. Many of you have likely already made a trip there. If you are contemplating it, I leave you with this word: *Go.*

**Suggested Reading:**

Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present*, chapter 8.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What has been the most surprising thing you have learned in this course?
2. What is *your* conclusion—is the glass half-full or half-empty? What are the prospects for Africa?

## Bibliography

### Essential Reading:

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. New York: Anchor Books, 1994. First published in 1958 and undoubtedly the best-known book by an African writer in the wider world. Considered by some “God’s gift to African studies,” the novel gets “inside” an African culture—the Igbo of Nigeria—and shows the destructive impact of the onset of colonial and missionary activity.

Cooper, Frederick. *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. An exceptional book, distilling a great deal of learning into a single, rather slim volume. To my mind, the best single introduction to contemporary Africa, incredibly lucid and persuasive.

French, Howard. *A Continent for the Taking: The Tragedy and Hope of Africa*. New York: Vintage Books, 2005. Perhaps the best of several recent fine books on contemporary Africa (such as that by Bill Berkeley). French was the *New York Times* correspondent in Africa for many years. Very informative and never over the top but written with a passionate intensity born of both affection and disgust.

Gilbert, Erik, and Jonathan T. Reynolds. *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004. The most recent basic textbook on African history and quite impressive indeed. The colloquial style, obviously designed to appeal to undergraduates, may not be to everyone’s taste, but the summations of evidence, debates, and arguments are up to date and quite stimulating.

Mandela, Nelson. *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1994. Parts of Mandela’s memoir were originally written and hidden while he was in prison; others are drawn from interviews and essentially ghostwritten. But it is all riveting, one of the great stories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from his boyhood to his inauguration as South Africa’s first democratically elected president

Reader, John. *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*. New York: Vintage Books, 1999. A sweeping look at the entire history of Africa as a landmass and a stage for human history. The first parts are best, where Reader presents rather complex information and theory from geology and natural history in a quite understandable way.

Shillington, Kevin. *History of Africa*. Rev. ed. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995. A serviceable textbook that packs a great deal of information into a reasonable space, with many useful illustrations and maps.

Thompson, Leonard. *A History of South Africa*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001. The best one-volume history of South Africa—thorough, informative, and gracefully written by the late, distinguished authority.

### Supplementary Reading:

Achebe, Chinua. *Anthills of the Savannah*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1987. The last great novel by Africa’s most famous writer, a piercing—and wickedly funny—portrait of political corruption and the heroic efforts of a few to resist it. Bears more than a passing resemblance to the author’s native Nigeria.

———. *The Trouble with Nigeria*. Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984. A razor-sharp nonfiction indictment of his country’s leadership, from the pen of the great novelist and poet.

Anderson, David. *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2005. “Mau Mau,” the armed uprising against the British in 1950s Kenya, continues to fascinate fine historians, and Anderson’s new book, based on much previously unused archival data, is a premier example. The sheer ferocity of Britain’s counterattack on a movement that killed a total of 32 white settlers may astonish.

Armah, Ayi Kwei. *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1988. First published in 1968 and undoubtedly based on the fall of Kwame Nkrumah, it remains a classic statement, in novel form, of the disappointments of independence.

Asante, Molefe Kete. *Afrocentricity*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1988. A summary of one version of Afrocentric approaches to Africa and the African diaspora.

Ayittey, George. *Africa Betrayed*. New York: St. Martin’s, 1992. An African commentator places the blame for the continent’s plight squarely on its African leadership.

Berkeley, Bill. *The Graves Are Not Yet Full: Race, Tribe and Power in the Heart of Africa*. New York: Basic Books, 2001. An excellent and heartfelt examination of the actual nature of several of Africa’s crises, from a brilliant reporter.

Bernal, Martin. *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*. Two volumes. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987–1991. A study that, to say the least, proved controversial. Bernal argues that classical Greece in particular owed most everything to Egypt and the Near East.

Boahen, Adu. *African Perspectives on Colonialism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987. Considered reflections from the great Ghanaian historian (and briefly president).

——— (with J. F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Tidy). *Topics in West African History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Barlow, Essex, UK: Longman, 1986. Slim but informative volume introducing basic material on West African history.

Bratton, Michael, and Nicolas van de Walle. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Probably the most authoritative look at the wave of democratization that swept over Africa in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Clear and comprehensive.

Bundy, Colin. *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. Based on his truly seminal article of 1972, Bundy's book shows that innovation and market response among South African small farmers was not enough to prevent their marginalization in the name of white supremacy.

Caputo, Robert. *Kenya Journal*. Washington, D.C.: Elliott & Clark, 1992. A remarkable photographic journey through Kenya.

Cell, John. *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. A stimulating comparative history of segregation that argues that it was a modernization of white supremacy in the context of industrialization and urbanization—not simply a leftover from slavery or the frontier.

Coulson, David. *Namib*. London, UK: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1991. Astonishing photographs of an astonishing place, the stark desert along the coast of southwest Africa.

———. *The Roof of the World*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1983. Another beautiful but also informative book of photographs and commentary on the mountain ranges of Southern Africa.

Crush, Jonathan, Alan Jeeves, and David Yudelman. *South Africa's Labor Empire: A History of Black Migrancy to the Gold Mines*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991. By far the best short introduction to the overwhelming importance of labor migration in Southern Africa.

Curtin, Philip. *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969. Many of Curtin's works over a long and distinguished career deserve attention. This was, as some might say, the pioneering effort to be truly serious in counting the volume of the Atlantic slave trade. Roundly criticized, it has proven to be not terribly far off the mark.

Davidson, Basil, ed. *African Civilization Revisited: From Antiquity to Modern Times*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1991. A most valuable collection of primary documents on Africa from antiquity to, essentially, the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

———. *The African Slave Trade*. Rev. and expanded ed. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1980. A revision of his 1961 classic *Black Mother* and a digestible one-volume history of the Atlantic slave trade, from the most revered and respected popularizer of African history.

Decalo, Samuel. *Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Motivations and Constraints*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990. A fine study of military coups. Argues that they cannot be explained by theories of redressing abuses or corruption but, basically, by the less flattering quest for power.

De Kiewiet, C. W. *A History of South Africa, Social and Economic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941. Probably the oldest academic work in this bibliography. Despite some outdated terminology ("natives," for example), it remains a powerful history and was groundbreaking in its departure from white settler narratives.

Des Forges, Alison. "Leave None to Tell the Story": *Genocide in Rwanda*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999. Probably the closest thing to a definitive account of the 1994 Rwanda genocide. Comprehensive and informative.

Diop, Cheikh Anta. *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*. New York: L. Hill, 1974. This is the classic argument that Egypt should be seen as black African in origin and the fount of other African, as well as European, civilizations.

Elphick, Richard, and Hermann Giliomee, eds. *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1840*. First Wesleyan Edition (revision of 1979 original edition). Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1989. The most comprehensive volume on the old Cape Colony under, first, Dutch, then, British rule. Essays on every aspect of colonial society from acknowledged authorities.

Equiano, Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Written by Himself*. Edited with an introduction by Robert J. Allison. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995 (first published in the United States in 1791). The ultimate ex-slave memoir, as fascinating today as when first published. Kidnapped in what is now Nigeria, Equiano survived the middle passage to the West Indies, was eventually emancipated, and became an eloquent voice for abolition.

Fredrickson, George. *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. The sequel to his *White Supremacy* and, obviously, the other side of the coin. Equally impressive.

———. *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981. A pioneering study in comparative history, illuminating numerous segments in the histories of both countries.

Gann, L. H., and Peter Duignan, eds. *Colonialism in Africa. 1870–1960*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1969–1975. Five-volume collection on all aspects of the colonial period, edited by two conservative scholars. Includes many fine essays.

Giliomee, Hermann. *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003. This will be the definitive history of the Afrikaners, from the fine South African historian.

Gourevitch, Philip. *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998. The best known of the journalistic treatments of the 1994 Rwanda genocide and certainly a book to hold one's attention, even if in horror.

Hamilton, Carolyn, ed. *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History*. Johannesburg and Durban, South Africa: Witwatersrand University Press and University of Natal Press, 1995. A superb collection of essays that treat all aspects of the so-called "Mfecane" disruptions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Several respond to the radical revisionism of Julian Cobbing, who argued that it was largely the European-run slave trade rather than African statebuilding that was responsible.

———. *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998. Hamilton, one of the foremost authorities on Zulu history, shows that images and opinions of Shaka, founder of the Zulu kingdom, have always been varied and contradictory and defy neat categorization into white versus black or colonialist versus indigenous.

Hargreaves, John. *Decolonization in Africa*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Longman, 1996. An excellent survey of the whole process of ending colonial rule in Africa.

Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. Boston and New York: Mariner/Houghton Mifflin, 1999. Written in an exceptionally engaging style, a story at once horrifying—in its accounts of the greed and brutality behind the Belgian king's founding of the modern Congo—and inspiring—in its portrayals of the many who courageously exposed the abuses.

Hunter, Susan. *Black Death: AIDS in Africa*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. For the lay reader, this is the best survey of the impact of the pandemic on Africa.

Iliffe, John. *Africans: The History of a Continent*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. In the view of some, the best one-volume history of the continent, written by a distinguished senior historian. Comparable in sweep to John Reader's book, though more academic in style.

Jeal, Tim. *Livingstone*. London, UK: Heinemann, 1973. Still probably the best biography of the remarkable and enigmatic David Livingstone.

Kapuściński, Ryszard. *The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983. An astounding portrait of an absolute ruler and his fall: Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.

———. *The Shadow of the Sun*. New York: Vintage Books, 2002. Absolutely fascinating pieces of reportage from various parts of the African continent, from the gifted, courageous, and legendary Polish journalist.

Kaunda, Kenneth. *Zambia Shall Be Free: An Autobiography*. London, UK: Heinemann, 1962. A book that is still inspirational and captures the hopes of the nationalist era, from the man who became Zambia's president—for 27 years.

Kenyatta, Jomo. *Facing Mount Kenya*. New York: Vintage Books, 1965. The doctoral dissertation of the man who became the first president of independent Kenya. First published in 1938, *Facing Mount Kenya* remains fascinating

and invaluable because it can be read on many levels: (1) as a thorough and informative ethnography, (2) as a proto-nationalist polemic, and (3) as a rationalization of patriarchy.

Laye, Camara. *The Guardian of the Word*. Translated from the French by James Kirkup. New York: Aventura, 1984. Perhaps the most accessible version of West Africa's greatest epic, the story of Sundiata, founder king of Mali. Written in novel style by a great African novelist, based on his recording of the famous *griot* (oral historian) Babu Conde.

Lefkowitz, Mary. *Not Out of Africa: How "Afrocentrism" Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History*. New York: Basic Books, 1996. The most convincing response to Bernal, Asante, and others who attribute origins of "Western civilization" to Africa or the Near East.

Maloba, Wunyabari O. *Mau Mau and Kenya: An Analysis of a Peasant Revolt*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993. Solid account of the legendary Mau Mau rebellion.

Mamdani, Mahmood. *Citizen and Subject: Decentralized Despotism and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Mamdani's argument that the legacies of various forms of "Indirect Rule" hold the key to Africa's political crises is not altogether convincing, but the book is very stimulating indeed.

\_\_\_\_\_. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001. A nuanced study of the Rwanda genocide by one of the most influential and creative scholars in African studies today, originally from Uganda.

Marcus, Harold. *A History of Ethiopia*. Updated ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. A standard, comprehensive history by the late authority.

Martin, Phyllis, and Patrick O'Meara, eds. *Africa*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. A collection of survey articles, of varying quality, designed for introductory students.

Meldrum, Andrew. *Where We Have Hope: A Memoir of Zimbabwe*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2004. The journalist Meldrum went to Zimbabwe in 1980 intending to stay three years. He fell in love with the place and stayed on, but his fearless writing about the ruling party's growing despotism led to his expulsion in 2003. Moving and informative.

Meredith, Martin. *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2002. A searing portrait of promise gone wrong, from a veteran observer of Africa.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Past Is Another Country: Rhodesia, UDI to Independence*. London, UK: A. Deutsch, 1979. A clear and informative overall history of Zimbabwe's turbulent path to independence.

Miller, Joseph. *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730–1830*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988. The *opus magnum* of a very respected scholar and, possibly, the most detailed examination of the slave trade in a particular African locality.

Minter, William. *King Solomon's Mines Revisited: Western Interests and the Burdened History of Southern Africa*. New York: Basic Books, 1986. A critical and well-researched history of Western involvement in Southern Africa over the past century plus.

Nkrumah, Kwame. *The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*. New York: International Publishers, 1971. First published in 1957, the year Nkrumah led Ghana to independence. Still a valuable source for understanding the first generation of triumphant nationalists.

Northrup, David, ed. *The Atlantic Slave Trade*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. Superb selection of excerpts from all the main authorities on the slave trade.

Nzongola-Ntalaja, Georges. *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*. London and New York: Zed Books, 2002. Somewhat heavy with radical jargon but a thorough and revealing history from a respected Congolese scholar, a former president of the U.S. African Studies Association.

Oliver, Roland. *The African Experience: Major Themes in African History from Earliest Times to the Present*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991. Another fine one-volume history from an eminent authority. May be a bit denser than books by Reader or Iiffe.

Omer-Cooper, John. *The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Bantu Africa*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966. A classic in modern African studies that stands up quite well decades later, despite attacks on it.

Pakenham, Thomas. *The Boer War*. New York: Random House, 1993. A magisterial history of the conflict in South Africa between the British and the Dutch-descended white Afrikaners.

———. *The Scramble for Africa, 1876–1912*. New York: Random House, 1991. A comprehensive and clear narrative of the European colonization of virtually the whole continent at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Parrinder, Edward Geoffrey. *Religion in Africa*. Baltimore: Penguin Press, 1969. (A revised and updated version was published in Britain by Sheldon Press in 1976 as *Africa's Three Religions*.) Despite being published some time ago, this volume remains a useful overview of indigenous religion, Christianity, and Islam in Africa over the long run.

Peires, Jeffrey. *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856–7*.

Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. A remarkable book about a remarkable and tragic episode: the millenarian response of the Xhosa peoples of South Africa, who under frontier pressure and inspired by a young girl's prophecy, slaughtered tens of thousands of their cattle in the vain hope of ushering in a "new age."

Ranger, Terence. *Are We Not Also Men? The Samkange Family & African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920–1964*.

Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995. Ranger is certainly among the most distinguished of living historians of Africa. Of his many books, this is perhaps the most appealing, the story of generations of a talented, well-known Zimbabwean family living through colonial rule; based on rich, privately held material, such as letters and diaries.

Robinson, David. *Muslim Societies in African History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. A recent and welcome examination of the interplay between African cultures and Islam, with well-drawn case studies. From a distinguished scholar and quite readable.

Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1997 (first published in 1972). The classic statement of "underdevelopment theory" as applied to Africa, from the late Guyanese scholar and activist. Indeed an overstatement, but one that nonetheless still packs a considerable punch and makes a number of telling points.

Sahlins, Marshall. *Stone Age Economics*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1981 (first published in 1972). Includes Southern African San, or "Bushmen," in a wider survey of foraging lifestyles; argues that this was not a desperate, eke-out-a-living situation at all, but one providing a comfortable life with plenty of time for creativity and leisure.

Sibomana, André. *Hope for Rwanda: Conversations with Laure Guibert and Hervé Deguine*. London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 1999. An extraordinary book from an extraordinary man, dead far too young: Rwandan, Hutu, Catholic priest, crusading journalist, and humanist. Full of insights into Rwanda's tragedy yet not without hope, as the title suggests.

Sparks, Allister. *Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. Third in Sparks's trilogy and probably the best look at the realities, problems, and prospects of postapartheid South Africa.

———. *The Mind of South Africa*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1991. Sparks is arguably South Africa's premier journalist of recent times. This is the first part of his trilogy on his home country and certainly the one with the largest sweep: essentially an extremely readable history that ends just before Mandela's tide-turning release in 1990.

———. *Tomorrow Is Another Country: The Inside Story of South Africa's Road to Change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. Second in Sparks's trilogy, the ultimate inside account of the negotiations leading to Mandela's release and those that produced the new political regime in South Africa.

Thomas, Elizabeth Marshall. *The Harmless People*. New York: Knopf, 1959. The classic account of a community of San, or so-called "Bushmen," deep in the Kgalagadi (Kalahari) Desert.

Thompson, Leonard. *Survival in Two Worlds: Moshoeshoe of Lesotho, 1786–1870*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1975. A master historian's definitive study of a towering figure of Southern African history. Moshoeshoe, king of Lesotho, lived through both the "Mfecane" and the coming of the European frontier. He was responsible for Lesotho remaining outside—though surrounded by—modern South Africa.

Thornton, John. *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. A comprehensive look at the Atlantic slave trade. Thornton portrays African leaders as active and capable agents in the system, not helpless victims, and is skeptical that the trade seriously handicapped Africa's development.

Van Onselen, Charles. *The Seed Is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894–1985*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1996. An awesome work that traces one sharecropper family in South Africa for a century, squarely in the context of developing segregation and apartheid.

Vansina, Jan. *Oral Tradition as History*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985. One of many books by one of the deans of modern African historical studies and a real pioneer in legitimizing the use of oral sources for historical reconstruction.

Vickery, Kenneth P. *Black and White in Southern Zambia: The Tonga Plateau and British Imperialism, 1890–1939*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986. A study of colonial Zambia illustrating something of a peasant “victory” over settler interests in the colonial period.

Wrong, Michaela. *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz: Living on the Brink of Disaster in Mobutu’s Congo*. New York: Perennial, 2002. A lively and fascinating, if depressing, account of Mobutu’s regime.

#### **Internet Resources:**

“African History on the Internet,” *Africa South of the Sahara*.

<http://www.sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/history.html>. A Stanford University site with hundreds of links to sources on African history. Searchable by more than 30 topics, including slavery, ancient civilizations and kingdoms, colonial period, and religion.

“African Studies Center—University of Pennsylvania,”

<http://www.africa.upenn.edu>. Solid basic information (maps, State Department summaries, and so forth) on each country in Africa, plus links related to that country.

“allAfrica.com,” <http://allafrica.com>. The most comprehensive source for news from Africa, including stories from hundreds of African newspapers and media outlets. Numerous feature sections (business, sport, and others), as well.

“BBC News International Version-Africa.” *BBC News*. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/default.stm>. The BBC News Africa site. Another outstanding source for information out of Africa. Widely used and respected in Africa itself.

“Mail & Guardian Online,” <http://www.mg.co.za>. Site of the *Mail & Guardian*, South Africa’s finest newspaper, with solid coverage of other countries in the Southern African region as well.