The Scramble for Africa

*Human Legacy*, Chapter 25.3,
Pages 756-760
The New Imperialism

“European countries controlled only a small part of Africa in 1880, but by 1914, only Ethiopia and Liberia remained independent. During the period known as the “Scramble for Africa” European powers rapidly divided Africa.”

“Historian’s view the scramble as the most visible example of the new imperialism. Unlike the imperialism of the 1500’s and 1600’s, the new imperialism was not based on settlement of colonies. Instead, European powers worked to directly govern large areas occupied by non-European peoples. Europeans were driven by 1) economic interests, 2) political competition and 3) cultural motives.”

~ Human Legacy, page 757.
Economic Interests

- **Slave trade**
  - Early 1800s
  - Britain abolishes slave trade in 1807

- **Natural Resources**
  - Coal, metals, rubber

- **Dollar Diplomacy**
  - Entrepreneurs (bourgeoisie) develop mines & plantations in Africa
  - European governments provided military intervention in support of these economic ventures
Political Competition

- **European Rivalries**
  - As the French expand in Africa, The British seek to contain them

- **Germany & Italy**
  - Late comers to the colonial race
  - Anxious to assert status as a great power

- **Nationalism**
  - Control of colonies gains more respect from other nations
Cultural Motives

• **Social–Darwinism**
  - Natural selection applied to nations
  - Certain nations more fit to rule than others

• **Moral Duty**
  - Improve the lives of less fortunate peoples
  - Bring the benefits of Western civilization
  - Spread Christianity

• **Ethno-centrism**
  - Europeans regarded non-Europeans as inferior cultures
Cecil Rhodes

- Wealthy English Businessman
- Advocate of Social Darwinism
- Wanted to build a railroad from Cairo to Capetown
  - “I contend that we are the finest race in the world and that the more we inhabit the better it is for the human race... What an alteration there would be if they (Africans) were brought under Anglo-Saxon influence.”
European Claims in Africa

“Prior to the 1880s, Europeans controlled some parts of the African. In the 1880s, driven by their new economic, political and cultural motives, Europeans began to compete for additional territory in Africa.”

~Human Legacy, Page 758.
Scientific Advances and Imperialism

- Rugged terrain & vast size no longer protect Africa
- Protection from disease
  - Quinine protected against malaria
- Automatic weapons
  - Machine guns
- Improved travel and communication
  - Steamships
  - Railroads
  - Telegraph
The Suez Canal

- Linked Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea
- Constructed in 1869
- Shortens trip from Europe to the Indian Ocean
- British occupy Egypt in 1882 to protect interests in the canal
- Egypt becomes a British protectorate (partial colony)
Division of Africa

- **Berlin Conference 1884-1885**
  - Settled disputes over European claims to African territory
  - Europeans had to notify other European countries of their claims
  - Nations had to actually occupy their claims
  - Claims disregarded traditional tribal boundaries
The Boer War

- South Africa
  - Settled by Dutch (Boers) in the 1600s
  - Gold discovered in 1800s
    - Boers refuse political rights to foreigners

- Boer War 1899-1902
  - British trying to absorb South Africa into the British Empire
  - Boers use guerilla tactics
  - British imprison Boers in camps
  - 20,000 women & children die
  - British defeat Boers
  - Boer territory becomes Union of South Africa under British control
The Belgian Congo

- **Leopold II**
  - King of Belgium
  - Claims the Congo as a personal fief
- **Demand for Rubber**
  - Bicycle & automobile tires
  - Congolese forced to extract rubber from rubber trees in the Congo
  - 25% of population dies from overwork & mistreatment
  - 1908 Belgian government takes control of the Congo
African Resistance

“Africans did not passively accept European claims to rule over them. As European troops advanced on African territory, they often met stiff resistance from local rulers and peoples.”

~Human Legacy, page 758.
The Zulu

• Shaka
  – Zulu leader
  – Subdues neighboring kingdoms
  – Builds a strong kingdom

• British Invasion 1879
  – Cetshwayo (nephew of Shaka) defeats British at Islandlwana
  – British defeat Zulus in 6 months and annex Zululand as a colony
• **Menelik II**
  – Modernizes the Ethiopian Army 1889
  – Italian Forces in 1895
  – Ethiopian forces are more numerous and equally or better armed.
  – Ethiopian defeat Italians at battle of Adwa
  – Ethiopia remains free for another generation
Other African Resistance

- **French West Africa**
  - Samory Toure forms an army of the Malinke peoples to fight French rule
  - Fights for 15 years
  - Finally captured & defeated in 1898

- **German East Africa**
  - Maji Maji Rebellion 1905
    - Germany demands cotton
    - Africans rebel
    - Try to use *maji* (magic water) to protect from German bullets
    - Thousands of Africans killed