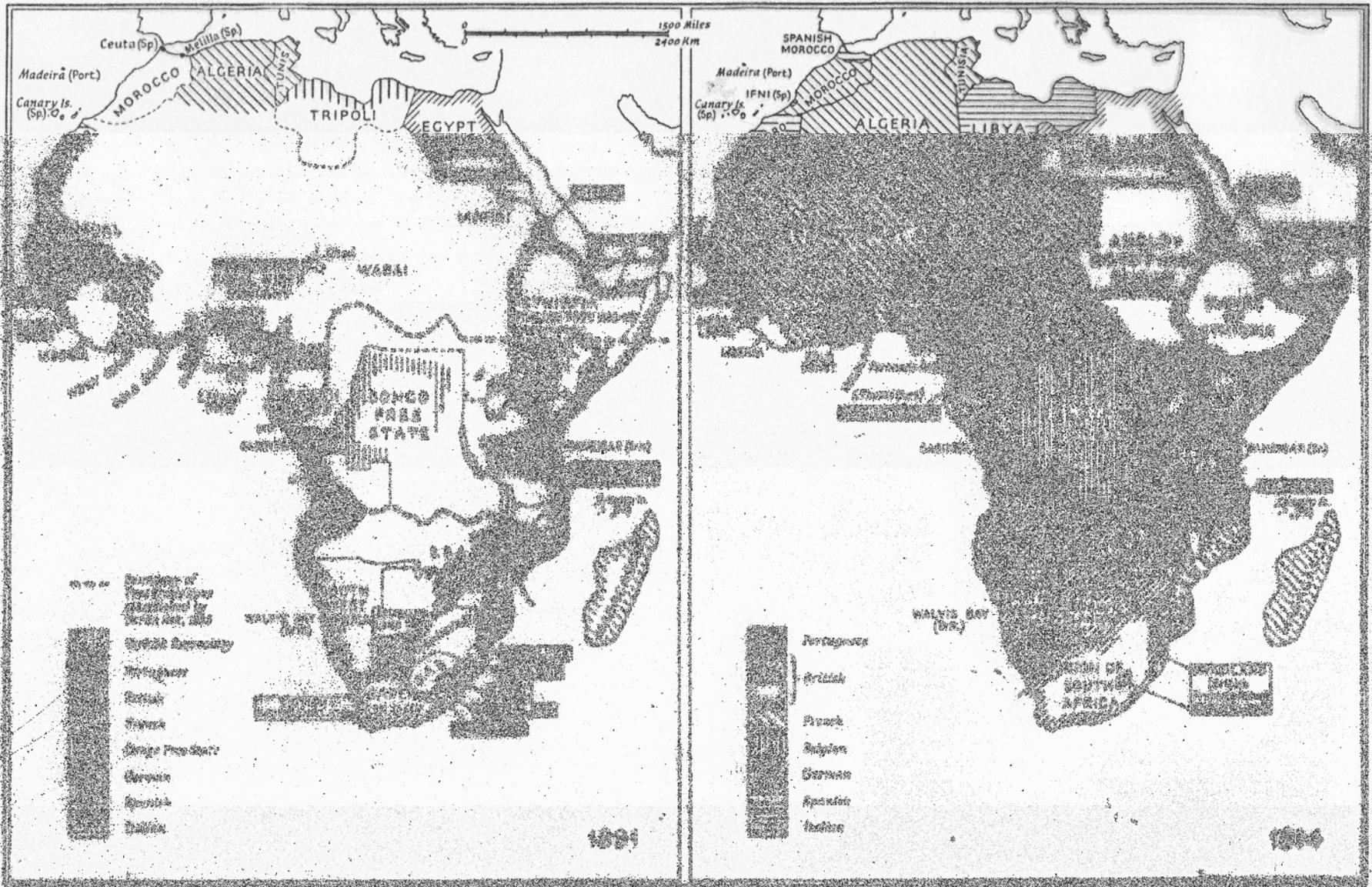


Scramble for Africa



51 The Pattern of Alien Rule in Africa, 1891

52 The Pattern of Alien Rule in Africa, 1914

The Industrial Revolution helped many western nations achieve unmatched economic and political power. In 1884, leaders of the European powers held an international conference in Berlin to discuss the partition of Africa. Without much knowledge of or regard for traditional African ethnic communities and territorial boundaries, Europeans drew their own borders and agreed to recognize the colonial acquisitions of any other European power. Within just 30 years, almost all of Africa—a continent four times as large as Europe—was under European political control.

MAP ACTIVITY

You will need different colored pens or magic markers for this exercise.

1. Look at the map of Africa on the previous page (from 1914). Which countries held colonies in Africa?
2. Using a different-colored marker for each of the European nations you listed in Question #1, color in that nation's colonial territories.
3. Which two countries held the most land in Africa?
4. According to this map, how many African nations managed to resist colonization (as of 1914)?

Indirect Rule

Superior technology and weaponry gave the European powers a huge advantage over native African populations, and allowed European nations to conquer large portions of the continent rather quickly.

European leaders soon realized, however, that they could not rule the great variety of local African communities without spending an enormous amount of money. The solution to this problem was called “indirect rule.” The European colonial authorities cooperated with local

African leaders in order to exploit native workers and gain access to the continent’s valuable raw materials. In practice, indirect rule often meant overlooking the use of forced labor and the presence of slave-like conditions.



Rubber-collecting post in the Belgian Congo, 1905

The people shown in the picture above searched the inner reaches of the Congo jungle in order to collect rubber for large companies.

1. Do you think they were paid well for their labor? Why? Why not?
2. What do you think happened to the rubber that they collected? Where did it go?
3. What was it used for?

Roger Casement

Roger Casement was a member of the British consular service when he traveled to the Belgian-ruled Congo in 1903. The report he submitted to the British authorities exposed the horrific conditions of the African rubber trade. He conducted interviews with local community members, which revealed the results of indirect rule.

Read the following excerpt from Casement's report and answer the questions below:

Casement: "How much did you get paid for this?"

Entire audience: "We got no pay. We got nothing."

One local: "Our village got cloth and a little salt, but not the people who did the work. Our chief ate up the cloth; the workers got nothing...It used to take ten days to get the twenty baskets of rubber—we were always in the forest to find the rubber vines, to go without food, and our women had to give up cultivating the gardens. Then we starved."*

1. What kind of work were these Congo locals forced to perform?
2. Did they get paid for their work? Why/Why not?
3. Why did some of these workers starve?
4. What do you think happened to the rubber that was collected?
5. What is rubber used for today? List five things that are made from rubber:

* From *The Black Diaries: An Account of Roger Casement's Life and Times, with a Collection of his Diaries and Public Writings*, p. 112.