

**The Christianization of
Africa in the Colonial Era of
the 19th Century:
Westernization and Policy of
Annihilation**

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Abstract

This article, which makes use of archival material, discusses The Christianization of Africa and its repercussions on the African social structure of the 19th century. To penetrate into the interior of Africa for the benefit of British industries, England had to abolish the slave trade in 1807. The idea of the abolitionists of the Clapham Sect to uplift the African with the new values of European know-how never took place. The Europeans only had the Bible to offer. Imminently, with the Scramble for Africa under way, the African moral and cultural standards came under impending threat, and the ancestral heritage put to the sword.

Introduction

How to save Africa from darkness? The answer came from the British abolitionists of the Clapham Sect who believed the Gospel to be the panacea for the resuscitation of the African fate. The rhetoric from Clapham depicted the black man living in darkness and superstition. The religion and the civilization of the white man were believed to revive his moral, religious, cultural and spiritual backwardness. In addition to the elevation of the heathen's soul the promise to endow the African poor countries with European technological know-how was on the agenda. Under the lash of European competition, the British looked

Résumé

Avec le Christianisme arriva le colonialisme: la matrice de la barbarie. Cet article qui fait usage d'archives, dévoile la vérité sur l'aventure du Christianisme en Afrique durant la période coloniale du 19^{ème} siècle. Les philanthropes et les abolitionnistes britanniques de la Clapham Sect qui avaient mis fin à la Traite des nègres en 1807, pour les besoins des industries anglaises, pensaient que le Christianisme, la Civilisation occidentale et le Commerce légal pourraient régénérer l'Afrique. Alors que l'Africain attendait un manuel de technologie pour acquérir le savoir faire européen, seule la Bible lui fut donnée.

for new territories to conquer. The Africans envied the Europeans their manufactured goods, greeted Christianity and dreamed to be taught the skills of western technology. Once the safety of the route to the interior of the continent was assured, the white man showed another reality: the subjugation by colonial policies. To revive Africa was it necessary to root out the worship of the ancestral heritage and polygamy? If Christianity, the Civilization of the white man, and legal commerce pledged to elevate the spiritual, social and cultural condition of the black man, why did the Europeans turn iconoclasts? Why did they strike with a lash to impose the barbarous cruelty of colonialism? This article unveils the reality of the advent of Christianity in nineteenth-century Africa.

Religious and Moral Scruples: The Clapham Sect and the Missionary Enterprise Prophecy

In Britain, between 1790 and 1830, a group of philanthropists of the Clapham Sect campaigned for the abolition of slavery, while promoting missionary works. The slave traders opposed the idea and prophesied the conversion of the colonies into a state of complete chaos if slavery were ended. One prominent tireless figure in the struggle to abolish the slave trade in 1787 and 1789 was the politician and philanthropist William Wilberforce, acknowledged leader of the Clapham Sect whose abolitionism was derived from his evangelical Christianity. He entered the House of Commons in 1780. Founder of Anti-Slavery Society, he and his close friends Thomas Clarkson, Granville Sharp, Henry Thornton, Charles Grant, Edward James Eliot, Zachary Macaulay and James Stephen were first called the “Saints,” and in 1787, the Clapham Sect. This group of evangelical Christians considered as the London intelligentsia met daily in the Church of John Venn, rector of Clapham in south London (Hennell 238). Many were known members of parliament and in addition to their abolitionism, dedicated themselves to prison reform and prevention of cruel sports (Wilberforce 32). From Clapham, a deep sense of moral outrage, a common goal to free the defenceless slaves and a commitment to end the evil of slavery came to light. The physical and moral suffering of the slaves, the law asserting that a slave is in law a chattel of his master, and the inhuman condition of the journey from Africa to the West Indies led to a cry for liberty.

The stories brought by the liberated slaves recounting their captivity in slavery and their longing for freedom did encourage the

abolitionists in their fight to end slavery. Job Jalla, a liberated fulla slave arrived in London to tell his story in an account written by Thomas Bluett, titled *Some Memoirs of Job, Son of Soloman, the High Priest of Boonda in Africa*. Job Jalla, or more correctly, Ayuba Sulliman Diallo, was a born Senegalese Muslim, caught and sold to an English trader and shipped to Annapolis in Maryland. The Autobiography of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African was published in London in 1783(Hogg 22). In his autobiographical narratives he described the moment he was kidnapped in 1756 with his sister from an Igbo village, recounted his enslavement as a boy of thirteen.¹ Mohammadi Sisly, whose history is recorded in the journal of the Royal Geographical Society, was Captured in 1810 and sold to a French slaver. Samuel adjayi Crowther, the slave who became bishop of the Niger, and whose career was succinctly described by Jesse Page as “kidnapped in 1821, a rescued slave in 1822, baptized in 1826, a teacher in 1828, a clergyman in 1843, (...)founder of a new mission in 1857, the first negro bishop in 1864. Where is the parallel to such a life?” (441). The slave narrative reached its height with Frederick Douglas’s *An American Slave* (1845), revised and completed in 1882 about the life and Times of Frederick Douglas. Separated as an infant from his slave mother, he lived with his grandmother on a Maryland plantation until the age of eight. He was the first black escaped slave to hold rank in the U.S Government. During the Civil War (1861-65), he became consultant to President Abraham Lincoln and was appointed U.S. Minister and Consul General to Haiti (1888-91).

Though the British abolitionists encouraged before 1807 and after the abolition the publication of those stories told by the freed slaves, in the House of Commons they advanced some other arguments directly related to the British interests skipping the long sought for African self-reliance. Thomas Clarkson, the most remarked figure in the campaign against slavery, a noted British philanthropist and a close associate of William Wilberforce known for his integrity and anti-slavery views in his outrageous *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, condemned the paradigm of evil that David Livingstone called “the bleeding wound of humanity” and mentioned “the barbarous and inhuman treatment that fell to the lot of slaves” who were viewed by their possessors as “brutal species.”² The accounts of Thomas Clarkson about the Middle passage—the journey of the slaves from the West Coast of Africa to the West Indies—about

the immorality of the trade had a positive outcome in 1760, when the anti-slavery Society was founded.³ In 1767 Granville Sharp defended the case of James Somersett, a slave who was brought to England and escaped from his master called Jonathan Strong. In court Sharp fought the case heroically and finally was able to get Somersett free. Ever since, it became a law: a slave becomes free the moment he arrives on English soil. Now that the slave became free was he going to be elevated to the human rank? Surprisingly, in the aftermath of the abolition, the soil and the climate of Africa were on top of the agenda. Control over the black continent was within the European grasp and the African ancestral heritage came under the surgeon's knife.

The Doctrine of the Bible and the Plough: Indoctrination and Brainwashing

In 1799, in Castle and Falcon Aldersgate Street in London, twenty five evangelical clergy members of the Church of England founded the Church Missionary Society (Stock 91). It stood as a new religious enterprise for the propagation of the knowledge of the Gospel among the heathens of Africa and the Orient. As the interior of Africa remained strange and unfamiliar to Europeans, British explorers and geographers like Mungo park, the Lander Brothers, John Speke, Richard Burton, James Grant and others adventured in the interior of Africa with the Bible to ascertain the source of the rivers the Nile and the Niger. Their accounts were full of tales of "darkest Africa" and none featured more prominently than that of Dr. Livingstone and Henry Stanley.

When in 1858 Livingstone discovered Lake Mueri, he disappeared and everyone thought he had died. *The New York Herald* sent out a newspaper reporter called Henry Stanley to try and find him. He did find him in 1871 on the banks of Lake Tanganyika and greeted him with the bland comment "Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?"⁴ David Livingstone was a Scottish Congregationalist and missionary of the London Missionary Society (L.M.S.). He arrived at Cape Town on March 14, 1841 and for the next fifteen years he was continually on the move strengthening his determination as a missionary of the L.M.S. Responding to the delights of geographical and ethnic discoveries, and taking the risks for the sake of "Rule Britannia," he built for himself a great reputation as a dedicated Christian and a fervent anti-slavery advocate. He committed himself to Christianity, Commerce, and Western Civilization: the Trinity that Livingstone

believed was destined to open up Africa to satisfy British curiosity. Unable to judge rationally the African reality, and blind to their own defects, missionary reports and letters from Africa to London (Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures of 1858) failed in their endeavour to win plaudits for Africa. The narratives stated that there was no development and it became once more possible for Europeans to regard Africans as being "primitive," "without culture," "worshipping many gods," and incapable of achieving civilization on their own.⁵ From this arrogant and despotic depiction, Africans were stereotyped as inferior in quality, skill, and value.

During the period when Africans were taken to the Americas as slaves, white Europeans saw that all slaves were Africans (Osborne 275). They quickly developed the assumption that all black Africans were slaves: "they were not powerful generals or skilful craftspeople or artists, only dependent on white Europeans for work, food and shelter."⁶ The doctrine of the Bible and the Plough, the idea expressed in *The African Slave Trade and its Remedy* (1839) by the British philanthropist and politician Thomas Fowell Buxton who in 1822 succeeded William Wilberforce as leader of the campaign in the House of Commons for the abolition of slavery, inspired the British government to send an expedition to the Niger Delta in 1844. Believing that it was the responsibility of the government to find a new economic activity with Africa, the establishment of a new missionary headquarters was inevitable.⁷ The aim of the expedition was to make treaties with the African chiefs for the cessation of the traffic and to point out the advantage they would derive from a legal commerce with Great Britain. While the traffic was in the first place a direct consequence of centuries of European activity. Africa was not to blame.

Europe had fathered the overseas slave trade and made huge profits, but Europe in its imperial arrogance had ceased to recognize its morally repulsive behavior. The white man was the one who had encouraged and instigated the trade, brought the captives to transport them to his plantation and to use them as cheap labor, and poured quantities of fire arms in Africa. By preaching the Gospel in this part of the world, the missionaries beguiled the Africans with vague promises, forcibly applying a prolonged and intensive indoctrination. The Europeans, finding themselves with a military advantage over Africa, believed themselves superior and civilized, inflicted violence and brutality with the goal of annihilating the African Civilization.

The Denial of the African Self-Reliance

The inferiority of the African in terms of industrial development placed his land and his culture at the mercy of the great powers. Beneath the various labels of propaganda advanced by the British in introducing the doctrine of the Bible and the Plough as an excellent remedy to uproot Africa was in reality a huge colonial enterprise manipulated by new ambitious British financiers like the London banker Henry Thornton. Thornton's intention was to impoverish rather than to develop. In fact, in 1791, the British government passed an Act for the Sierra Leone Company which was directed by thirteen shareholders among whom were the well-known abolitionists and members of the Clapham Sect, William Wilberforce, Granville Sharp, and Thomas Clarkson. The company responsible for the import of African raw materials to England also had to propagate the Gospel. The attempt to end slavery in order to increase British trade relied on the unlimited stamina from the Christian missionaries who had a mission to propagate European values to the detriment of the ancestral tradition of the tribes. This meant to struggle against a ferocious environment composed by jungle, desert, mountains and savannah and inhabited by Zulu, Haussa, Kikuyu, Yoruba and Mossi, described by the explorers and missionaries as "savages."⁸

In this context, the European preconceived ideas were based on the assumption that the African was without religion and civilization and therefore was liable to accept all western religious dogmas. The West believed that the Bible was to elevate the soul of the African from his "primitive" customs and practices, while the plough was supposed to teach him the European know-how of agriculture.⁹ In reality, the explorers and the Christian missionaries who condemned the African customs and beliefs spoke "evil." Basically, they could not understand that the life of the African was deeply regulated by strong customs and traditions which were well structured and passed down from generation to generation (Kenyatta 271). Such traditions were inextricably linked and deeply rooted in the African mind and their demolition by another foreign device would prove ill-fated. Johann Ludwig, was the first European traveler tourist to the city of Petra and the Egyptian temple at Abu Simbal. He took a Muslim name of Ibrahim Ibn Allah and left his collection of Arabic manuscripts to the University of Cambridge. When he died at Cairo in 1817, was buried with Islamic rites.

The Broken Promises

Long after the abolition of the slave trade, Europeans still assumed the superiority of European culture and civilization over that of Africa. In the early part of the 19th century, the relationship between the western world and Africa was of power and domination. It was a relation between European superiority over African backwardness, the western iconoclasts against submissive people, the colonizer and the colonized. The question related to the equality of man that expected to usher the African into high esteem by Europeans was indefinitely a remote utopian and chimerical idea. Humiliated under the bondage of slavery and exploited by the abolitionists who proselytized the doctrine of the Bible and the Plough, the African who thought of himself free and self-directed was in reality still submitted and incapable to snatch himself from the clutches of his possessors. Those who bought him from the slaves market, transported him to the American colonies, freed him from slavery and at the end made of him the new servant of the God of Christianity under the imperial order of “Do as you are told.”

In this context, Simon Kimbango, a Congolese religious leader who founded a separatist church, was educated in the British Baptist Missionary’s Mission, and preached under the colonial order. He became famous in the region of lower Congo in April 1921 among the Bakongo people. He was also known as “the prophet in a cage”—In *Kkongo* “*Ngunza*”—who was reputed to heal the sick and raise the dead. Kimbango was preaching with no overtly political content, he aimed at a puritan ethic against the use of violence, polygamy, and witchcraft. The Belgian authorities were alarmed by his popularity among black Africans. In April 1921, while inaugurating a mass movement through his miraculous healings and teaching, he was charged with insurrection and imprisonment for life. Non-Christians were also persecuted by the colonial order.

On the other hand, Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba Mbakke, commonly known as Amadou Bamba (1850-1927), was a Muslim mystic, a spiritual leader from Senegal. He wrote on meditation, rituals and Quranic study. He is best known for his incessant emphasis on hard work and his followers are known for their industriousness and productiveness. The greater struggle or “jihad” for him is to fight not through weapons, but through learning and fear of God. He believed that salvation comes from submission to hard work. Bamba had converted many kings and their followers and probably could have

raised an army against the French colonizers if he wanted. He never hinted to war or the use of violence. Worried about his growing power as his fame spread, the French sentenced him to exile in Gabon (1895-1902) and later in Mauritania (1903-1907). The French realized that the man was not interested in waging war against them, and was rather cooperative. He won the French Legion of Honor for encouraging his followers to help fight in the First World War. Believing that his doctrine of hard work could be useful to serve the French colonial economic interests, the French allowed him to establish his community in Touba, where he is said to have founded the holy city of Mauradism.

Colonialism and the bitter tyranny emptied the continent of its resources and drained its scholars of strength. To propagate the Gospel to the heathens, it became indispensable to establish Christian institutions in Africa. When the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) took charge of founding the first Christian institution of Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone to train emancipated Africans as teachers, catechists and missionaries, the aim was that the liberated slaves were asked to go back to their own villages in order to convert into Christianity both their families and countrymen.¹⁰ In reality, Africa came in contact with Christianity long before the establishment of British Christian institutions in the western parts of the black continent. It is believed that it began in Egypt in the Middle of the 1st century. Ethiopia has always been a market place of ideas since the days of its contacts with Egypt, Greece and Rome. As a matter of fact, Christianity did not arrive in Africa with the abolition of the slave trade and the western missionaries. The Africans of Ethiopia curved their Christian shrines out of the rocks a long time before Christianity ever reached Europe and the shores of Britain. In fact, there were black African Christians before there ever were British Christians.

According to the Coptic Church, the keys of God's kingdom had arrived in the Nile Valley with Saint Mark during the early years of the Christian era. The rituals have continued in Ethiopia ever since. The Kingdom of Aksum had its own written language known as Ge'ez, and developed an architecture of giant obelisks that date from 5000-2000 BC. The Ethiopian scholars were reading and writing before they became Christians and long before England was taught the Latin alphabet by the Romans. In Ethiopia the church became the keeper of the written words and Christian religion has often been a source of literacy. Christian Ethiopians could teach the western

missionaries a lesson about the Mild truths of the Gospel. If Christianity entered Britain precisely in 597 thanks to the efforts of monk Augustine in the early fourth century under the reign of king Ezana of Ethiopia (Abreha), it was already well established in this region of Africa, where it continued to prosper until the 9th century.

The Tools of Exploitation: The Dehumanization of Africa

The western world and Africa meant a relationship of power and domination, hegemony and privation, and exploitation and profit. Africa was opened up by European explorers, missionaries and traders, and then divided up by European politicians. The Scramble for Africa meant the carving out of the Black continent by Europeans. While in 1875 only one tenth of Africa was controlled by European powers, by the end of the century nine tenths had been taken over. In the Berlin conference of 1885 the fourteen European powers divided up Africa with the presence of not one single African. Then, as iconoclasts, they entered a land of mystery, not knowing the tribes, the culture and the civilization.¹¹ The rush was started by the king of the Belgians Leopold when he founded the International Association for the Exploration and Civilization of Africa in 1876. He was bidding for the Congo, rich in rubber, as his personal real estate. In West Africa, Britain's interest in the palm oil trade with the so-called Slave Coast and the Oil Rivers, was increased by a sincere desire to stop the slave trade in Dahomey (now Benin). This was one of the reasons why Britain captured Lagos in 1851. It laid claim to the region from the Cameroons to Lagos. This became known as the Oil Rivers Protectorate, later as the Niger Coast Protectorate and finally as Nigeria. By 1920 every square mile of Africa except for Ethiopia was under colonial rule of protection.

When the Europeans entered Africa, they did not want to learn from the technology they had found. Theirs was more arrogant, more self-confident and less compromising. British colonial policy maker Lord Lugard, Governor General of Nigeria (1914-1919), in his *Dual Mandate in tropical Africa* (1922), argued that Europe had a double mission in Africa. One was to develop Africa's resources for Africa's all benefit, the other was to use those resources to meet the growing industrial requirements of the western world. The Dual Mandate discusses the partnership between Africa and the West. Frankly speaking, European's new technology had arrived upon Africa in search of the continent's unexplored and virgin wealth. With Lord

Lugard, the landscape would never be the same again: westernization without real modernization. The groaning about the African went on. In the aftermath of the abolition of slavery, the African was brought to low esteem, degraded to inferior rank, exposed to shame, humiliated and reduced to dishonor and ignominy. The different reports and letters from Africa depicted him in conjunction with religious rites usually including the eating of certain human organs believed to be the chief source of desired virtues and powers. The Europeans condemned the religion they found—the rituals, the art, and the sacrifices and even hinted in their narratives to cannibalism. During the twentieth century, European anthropologists spoke in their lexicon in terms of “primitive societies,” those usually characterized by lack of written language, technology, development, and by a slow rate of socio-cultural change. The term primitive also meant savage. Those two terms were used by anthropologists and writers with the implication that the people of Africa were mentally and morally inferior. The colonial enterprise of the 19th century provided the West with a various examples of cultures which determined that the primitive, or more often the savage, came from remote places like central and southern Africa, the Americas and Oceania.

In this context, western countries believed that they enclosed their own primitives. Colonial exhibitions with the famous Benin bronzes and some African sculptures were on show in Europe. At the *Exposition Universelle* in 1899, the so-called *Villages Indigènes*, a human zoo, were constructed on the Champs de Mars in which the Parisian visitor was invited to see Africans going about their everyday lives, wearing their traditional costumes. In reality, exhibiting peoples in public places was not much that they might be understood, but as a means of exercising control over them and on what they possess. Wallace Budge and Giovanni Battista Belzoni were two figures in the world of looting and pillage of African art.¹² Budge, on the other hand, provided Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities for the British Museum. He collected vast numbers of cuneiform tablets, Egyptian papyri, and Ethiopic manuscripts. Working for the museum, he made many trips to Egypt and the Sudan to conduct archeological sites. Belzoni, the other plunderer of Egyptian archaeological sites, went to Egypt in 1815 to exhibit models of hydraulic engines then turned on a new lucrative career. He excavated and looted Egyptian tombs and temples for their treasures. His discoveries might rather be regarded as pillage. He is remembered for the colossal sculpture of the head of

Ramses II for the British Museum. He discovered the tomb of Seti I and removed the aragonite sarcophagus for the Sir John Soane's Museum, London. The treasures of African art still embellish European museums and attract millions of tourists to London, Paris, Rome and Madrid each year. Among them Africans who pay entrance tickets and queue long hours to glance at their own plundered heritage. A question must be asked: What do African museums exhibit of the European?

The Tools of Terror: Who Deserved to be Civilized, the White Man or the African?

The slave trade was a denial of freedom for those transported to the Americas, and a denial of improvement for the continent they left behind. Europe not only refused to help develop Africa, it arrogantly and savagely buried its skills. The slave trade rapidly transformed the black man into the most humiliated race in recorded human history. How many of them were sold into slavery?¹³ It is impossible to give the right figure. It was reported that the conditions of the trip were unbearable and many died in transport. During the Berlin Conference of 1884, the assembled countries found a pretext for intervention: the Arab slave trade. To secure Africa for the West, it had to be taken away from the Arabs. A new form of terror was about to follow the slave trade. The West had condemned the Arab slave trade, but introduced a new tool of terror, colonialism: the matrix of barbarism. It was vital that Britain gain control of unclaimed lands before Germany, Portugal and France. The rush to conquer rapidly created a rivalry between the developed countries. Striving for competitive advantage, they ignored the individual liberties of the oppressed, though Lord Lugard outlined in the Dual Mandate the reasons and methods that he recommended for the colonization of Africa by Britain (Lugard 136).

Cecile Rhodes, who wanted to expand British colonialism rapidly before the other European powers believed Anglo-Saxon race was destined to greatness. This explains why African workers who did not produce enough were sometimes badly mutilated as an example to others. The British in Africa were motivated by three compelling forces: God, Gold and Glory: Gold for the British themselves, God for the natives and the greater Glory for Europe. They carried something else with them: Racism. They never left it behind, it was with them everywhere. Even in the trains which carried stereotype inscriptions

like “dogs and natives are not allowed in this compartment.” Assumption of racism was designed to execute its principles. While in Europe, people cherished the train which was seen as a symbol of industrial development, for the African it was an instrument of extraction. It cleared Africa of its wealth. Cecil Rhodes was Africa’s first millionaire. He made his fortune when gold was discovered in the Transvaal in 1882. His company, the Rhodes South Africa, controlled lands northwards and southwards of Bechuanaland (now Botswana). From 1890, he turned politician and became Prime Minister of Cape Colony. He hoped to build an African empire where the Anglo-Saxons should be leaders. He was the organizer of De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd., which was the giant Diamond mining company. In South Africa two countries were named after him: Northern and Southern Rhodesia. Rhodes pioneers set out in 1890 the pacification of Africa under the British flag. The conquerors called it “Pax Britannica.” Rhodes who was an imperial Pan Africanist, created the first army of white mercenaries in Africa. They conquered for the grandeur of queen and country. He dreamed of building a railway line going through bush, desert, hill and valley, all the way from the south to the Mediterranean: from Cape to Cairo.

No Western Skills but Only the Bible as a Gift ¹⁴

One of the cruel realities of world economy is that a continent so rich in natural and human resources should at the same time be so poor with very low standards. This treasure continent is inhabited by poverty and since the arrival of the white man, is plunged in grief and sadness. Many have condemned the partnership between western technology and African resources. While the white man kept on digging for African wealth to be taken away to European factories, the African kept on digging for his own burial. The European had occupied the black man’s country and chased him from his land. To have a salary, the only alternative left for the African was to work for the white man. To get his money back, the European started to tax the African. If there was any payment to be made in this case, we would have thought the transaction to be from the white man to the African as compensation or rent. But here it was the white man charging the African rent for forfeiting his farm in his country Africa. The nineteenth century colonial Europe believed in the congenital inequality of races, the incomprehensible mystery of colonialism dichotomized the human race into the white man who was clever and

educated and the colonized who was “native,” “savage,” “offering the blood of sacrifice to grinning gods, dancing in lunatic abandon around flames.”¹⁵ The white man never brought development in Africa, and by the Dual Mandate, Lord Lugard never helped create a successful exchange of African resources for western technology. The European who came to Africa had left behind him irreparable damages wherever he passed.

Today, Africans are still buying goods from other European nations rather than trying to make them themselves. Did the white man help develop the means of production when he was scrounging on the soil of Africa? The West has given Africans only unrealistic and imaginary illusion of western technology. The solid substance of Africa’s resources was forfeited in exchange of ephemeral western values. It was all about the foreigner and the native, the natural and the artificial. Basically, no one can speak in terms of the civilization of the West in Africa as preached by David Livingstone. It was only a façade of the western way of life and the western style. Africa bought guns and explosives but never got the western skills. That is how the Europeans of the 19th and 20th centuries wanted the world to be: molding and shaping the defenseless as they pleased. The primary cause is that science and technology had passed by Africa and that the industrial revolution had never caught up with the black man. What Africa wanted was not missionary education, but western skills. Sincerely, the bible was not a manual of technology. The missionaries instructed the Africans to read and write but it was religion which was their priority.

Western education discouraged the Africans from manual labor, instead it taught the natives to wear western, dance western and speak western. Christianity which came to Africa with imperialism and exploitative capitalism looked for parity and skipped production. It came to exploit rather than to elevate and in the name of the civilization of the white man and Christian ethics it betrayed the fidelity of Livingstone’s natives who admired and respected the Victorian missionary as they carried his dead body hundreds of miles through jungle and forest. Indeed, Africa was in need to be taught the science of application of knowledge to her practical purposes. Africa had exported to the West men, women, and rich natural resources: implements of production, while it has imported from the West guns and explosives, by definition, instruments of destruction. Indeed, the slave trade and the gun trade were interconnected; the guns were the

currency with which the slaves were bought: one gun for one slave (Davidson 239). And yet the guns initiated a new culture of violence which extends right into present-day Africa.

Since the arrival of the Europeans with their preconceived ideas, they denied the African his full humanity. To uplift him, they started without considering the essentially backward nature of his religious customs and beliefs. Yet, the violent condemnation was a sign of misunderstanding of the reality of African life. As iconoclasts, the missionaries attacked the deeply rooted belief of polygamy and insisted that the new converts must accept the Christian religion and give up other fundamental principles of the African ancestral heritage like dances, feasts, rituals, ceremonies. The African social structure which was based on polygamy was rejected by the Christian preachers who wanted their proselytes to abandon it, and imposed instead monogamy as a condition for salvation of the soul. Deprived from all sense of personal dignity and declined to an inferior state of shameful distortion and cut off from his African cultural, economic, social and political values, the African decided to defend himself against the forces of incessant exploitation.

The Crying Need for Independence

The first signs of resistance against the oppressor were apparent when the slogan “Africa for the Africans” was displayed in the 1880s. From the church in South Africa, an ex-Wesleyan, Minister Mangena Mokene was the first to have used the term Ethiopianism when he founded the Ethiopian Church. There, Africans resented the blatant discrimination of the white colonialists who denied them positions and advancement in religious and political hierarchies. Also, it was a question of racial discontent encouraged by the color.¹⁶ The Africans who wanted a return to tribal life claimed a version of Christianity relevant for Africa. Ethiopianism as a movement developed among sub-Saharan Africans and is considered as the first stirring toward religious and political freedom in the colonial era. On the other hand, the Mau Mau, militant African nationalist movement in the 1950s originated among the Kikuyu people of Kenya. The movement advocated a fierce resistance to the physical grip of British domination. The British Kenya Government called the rebels terrorists and declared a state of emergency and began to exterminate Kikuyu people. More than eleven hundred Africans were killed and twenty thousand others were put into detention camps, where British military

officers made intensive efforts through torture to convert them to the political views of the British Kenya Government.

Furthermore, with the Negritude literary movement of the 1930s, 40s and 50s that began in Paris among French-speaking African and Caribbean writers as a protest against the French policy of exploitation and assimilation, Leonald Sedar Senghor, Aimé Césaire, and Léon Dumas, started to reassess African culture. Disturbed by the World Wars in which they saw their countrymen dying for a cause that was not theirs, they assumed in their writings that the African had a particular history and culture and that Africa can chiefly be benefited by her own children. Will the old sleeping African kingdoms be awoken again? It was only after 1950 that anti-colonial¹⁷ and independence movements emerged and became widespread, and one after the other, colonies became independent. As we have seen all along this paper, the Europeans in Africa have dichotomized the concept of civilization into good and evil, in other words, in the European colonial Christian thought, there is a hierarchy between the different civilizations of the world: The good ones and the evil ones. Before the period of pre-colonization, Africa was a nation characterized by prosperity with rich varied cultures, a philosophy¹⁸ and art, and a thriving commerce. It possessed noble and magnificent kingdoms and monuments like the ancient kingdoms of Egypt, Ghana, Mali, Songhai and Axum. Unfortunately, African splendor has been twisted and the history of the black man distorted and ignored. With Christianity came Colonialism which was horrendous, pernicious and annihilative.

Conclusion

The Scramble for Africa plunged the black man into a situation of depression and humiliation, worse than captivity in slavery. The European commercial necessity and the thirst for wealth imposed on the African the worst unfair treatment in history—military occupation. As a matter of fact, Africa in the early part of the 19th century had neither knowledge nor skills to devise plans to exploit her vast resources for her own benefit. She was for want of Christian ingenuity. She greeted Christianity, expected to be awarded dignity and honor and hoped to benefit from her partnership with Europe. Instead, she was granted the Bible and the barbarity of colonialism. During the colonial era of the 19th century, the black man was left to his fate. Cruelty against him and his ancestral values increased to an

incredible degree. Christianity idolized colonialism and did not provide care and support. The Gospel which accounted for the supremacy and prosperity of the white man failed to do the same for the African.

Notes

¹. Peter Hogg, *Slavery- The Afro-American Experience*. (London: British Library), 1973, p. 21.

². Thomas Clarkson, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human species* (London: Ams Press), 1838, p.11.

³. Wilberforce, William. *Letter to the Prince de Talleyrand Périgord* (about the slave trade) London, October, 1814.

⁴. Clare Pettitt, "Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?" *Missionaries, Journalists, Explorers, and Empire* (London: Profile Books Ltd.), 2007, p.16.

⁵. Crowther, Samuel, Adjayi to C.G. Greenway, Esq. Abeokuta, Sept.15th 1847, C.M.S. CA2/031/2. In a letter sent by the missionary of the C.M.S., S.A., Crowther wrote: "The people of this country are very superstitious as you well imagine. They worship numberless gods (...) they worship thunder and lightning, the God of river, snakes, crocodiles (...) they worship their deceased fathers whom they suppose can bestow blessings upon their living offspring."

⁶. Roger Osborne, *Civilization: A New History of the Western World* (London: Pimlico, 2007), p.280.

⁷. Thomas Fowell Buxton, *Lecture addressed to the Literary and Scientific Society- Great Yarmouth* (February): 26-1878. London: 1878, p21.

⁸. P,A Davill, & W,R. Stirling, *Britain and the World-The Exploding Years* (London: Schofield & Sims Ltd., 1974), pp.17-20.

⁹. Buxton, Thomas, Fowell, *The Slave Trade and Its Remedy* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1834). Believing Britain to be the panacea for Africa, Buxton wrote "It is the duty of Great Britain to employ the influence and the strength which God had given her in raising Africa from the dust" p.529.

¹⁰. See Archives of C.M.S., University of Birmingham, "Heslop Room". Samuel Adjayi Crowther recounted in a letter to Secretary of the C.M.S, the conversion of his mother to Christianity (C.M.S. CA2./031/2.).

¹¹. Kenyatta, Jomo, Facing Mount Kenya. *The Traditional Life of the Gikuyu* (London: A.M.S, 1979), p.271.

¹². Sir Wallis Budge is best known for his translation of the Book of the Dead, which is an account of the principal beliefs held by the ancient Egyptians. See Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Religion, ideas of the future life*. London: Arkana, 1987.

¹³. Basil Davidson, *Black Mother* (London: Penguin), 1968, pp. 95-101.

¹⁴. Allen William, *Trotters's Expedition to the River Niger-1841* (London: Frank Cass & co.), 1848, p.279.

^{15.} Peter Brent, *Black Nile – Mungo Park and the Search for the Niger* (London: Gordon Cremones, Ltd.), 1977, p. 169.

^{16.} Conflicts arose between white and black missionaries. Samuel Adjayi Crowther, the Bishop of the Niger Mission (Nigeria) was deeply and painfully hurt by the C.M.S., which limited his powers, criticized the African missionaries for allowing polygamy and declared the Niger Mission a “den of thieves”. See J.B. Webster. *The African Churches Among the Yorubas-1888-1917* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1964. p.11.

^{17.} James Johnson, an African missionary of the C.M.S. in Nigeria drafted a number of patriotic ceremonies under the heading “Africa should rise”(…) and declared: “Gone were the days when the white man was regarded as a prestige symbol and when he could be trusted.(…)He was now being suspected as a knight-errant of British imperialism. See E.A. Ayandele, *Holy Johnson, Pioneer of African Nationalism.1836-1917* (New York: Humanities Press) ,1970, p.113.

^{18.} See Paulin J. Hountondji, *African Philosophy. Myth and Reality* (Second edition), trans. Henri Evans (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 1996, pp.111-130.

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