

# **AFRICAN BLOOD FOR IMPERIALIST INTERESTS: THE FIRST AND SECOND SCRAMBLES FOR AFRICA**

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## **IMPERIALISM, COLONIES, AND NEOCOLONIES**

Imperialism may be defined as the process of establishing colonial and neocolonial relationships. In a colonial relationship, the people and resources of one country called the colonized country are subjected to the power, authority and control of another of country called the colonial master. The relationship is essentially one between servants or slaves whose human and material resources primarily serve the interest of the master. A neocolonial relationship is not very different from a colonial relationship except that it is more subtle. In a neocolonial relationship, the people and resources of a country that has the outward appearance and trappings of an independent country but poor and relatively weak are subjected indirectly and informally to the power, authority and control of the rich and powerful states of the world. Thus, whereas the colonized country recognizes only one master but its resources may serve the interests of imperialism as a whole, the neocolonized country is compelled by its weak position and its very survival in the international arena to recognize several masters as its resources are exploited to serve the interests of the whole imperialist camp. Imperialism is nothing new or a unique character of the West. In ancient times the Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Huns, Turks and Mongols engaged in imperialism. However, in modern times, Western countries have been identified as the champions of imperialism although Soviet era imperialism including its Afghanistan experience cannot be denied.

There are several motives of imperialism including strategic, cultural, settlement of surplus population, economic, and prestige reasons, but the economic motive was principally what provided the impetus for Western colonization of the Third World and for the establishment of neocolonialism instead of decolonization. Because of the economic imperative, imperialism is essentially exploitative. As imperialism is driven by an exploitative motive so is capitalism which exploits labour to generate profit to the benefit of capital. When monopoly capitalism expands globally, its exploitative interest and that of imperialism become so fused that the two become integrated into an inseparable entity. Indeed, because imperialism has both political and economic motives, it becomes the political prerequisite for the expansion of capitalism and simultaneously capitalism becomes the economic aspect of imperialism. It is because of this inseparable relationship between advanced capitalism and imperialism that Lenin (1983) conceived of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism. However, since imperialism predates capitalism, capitalism may as well be the highest stage of imperialism in its exploitative characteristics.

The exploitative character of imperialism suggests that it can never be established without the shedding of blood, for no dominated society willfully embraces it, and African societies are no exceptions. Since the 19th century, African countries have been the victims of this bloody imperialism through both its colonialist and neocolonialist expressions and there

seems to be no end in sight. When the European slave trade in Africans was stopped finally in the nineteenth century, Africa did not enjoy sufficient breathing space to recover and embark upon its own development. In the same century, European imperialism raised its head with Africa as its primary target leading to a European scramble for Africa through which the continent was partitioned among European powers.

### **RATIONALE FOR THE FIRST SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA**

Various reasons have been advanced to explain the rationale for the imperialist scramble for Africa in the later half of the nineteenth century. Lenin (1983) explained it as an outcome of economic forces operating in Europe especially the requirement for areas where surplus capital could be invested. The surplus capital thesis of Lenin has been criticized by Fieldhouse (1981) on the grounds that imperialist investments in Africa were negligible compared to what was invested in the United States, Canada, and South America. Fieldhouse's argument also becomes weak when it is considered that the negligible investment in Africa does not necessarily mean there was no initial intention of the imperialists to invest. The imperialists might have changed their mind after the partition. Confrontation between the European powers particularly Britain and France which was sparked by Britain's occupation of Egypt in 1882 has been advanced by Robinson and Gallagher (1961) as the principal rationale. However, the evidence that the scramble was started by France in 1879 undermines the credibility of that explanation. Hargreaves, and Hopkins explain the scramble as arising from the combinations of internal conditions in Africa itself and external conditions emanating from Europe. Whatever explanation may be advanced, it cannot be denied that economic motives primarily and prestige motives secondarily provided the impetus. However, as explained below, it was the prestige motive which provided the spark.

Economic conditions in Europe provided the fuel. Tariff barriers created in Europe to protect infant industries as the industrial capitalism spread in that continent from England necessitated the creation of markets outside Europe which each particular European country could monopolize. Undersupply of raw materials to feed the industries meant the search for and control of areas from where raw materials could be obtained cheaply. Population explosion, unemployment and high crime rate in the wake of the development of capitalism were responsible for looking for areas where the surplus population of Europe could be dumped. The proximity of Africa to Europe, and its rich endowment in natural resources served as incentives for Europeans to colonize it. The white settler populations of Kenya, Zimbabwe, and South Africa today, the initial conception of Kenya as a white man's country, the introduction of Apartheid in South Africa, and the unilateral declaration of independence by Ian Smith in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) bear testimony of the intention of imperialism to dominate, rob and allocate African lands permanently to Europeans.

The prestige motive which sparked the scramble was first provided by France. In 1871, France suffered a humiliating defeat in its war with Germany. With the growing spirit of nationalism in Europe at the time, and having previously lost most of her possessions in the Americas, France embarked upon the acquisition of colonies in Africa to boost its nationalist spirit and to demonstrate its position as great power despite its humiliating defeat by Germany. France was followed by later by Belgium, Portugal, Britain and Germany. The

whole scramble was animated by the conception of national pride at the time that the more colonies an European country possessed the greater potential for economic power and political clout. The competition for colonies in Africa was so keen that the imperialists competitor soon realized that without proper rules of conduct for the game, they might be drawn into armed confrontations among themselves. It was in this context that they agreed to meet in Berlin under the chairmanship of the German Chancellor Bismarck. The rationale for attending the conference was “*Since we are all European wolves seeking to devour the African prey why should we devour one another because of that prey when we can conspire and agree on which section of that prey population any of us should devour?*”

### **THE BERLIN CONSPIRACY AGAINST AFRICA**

The Berlin Conference of November 15, 1884 to January 31, 1885 is a classic example of how subtly and effectively imperialists can conspire together to achieve a common goal. With the exception of the United States and Switzerland all countries of the West attended. No African State was invited, and that is what rendered the conference a conspiracy par excellence. According to this conspiracy of the participating countries, the colonization of Africa was to be carried out in three stages. The first stage involved agents of imperialism tricking African rulers into signing ambiguous treaties of protection with the European powers. Private companies of Europe and officials of European governments were actively involved in this tricking process. In the treaty, the European agent and trickster would promise an undertaking by his country to protect an African ruler from aggression and the African ruler would promise not to enter into the same kind of treaty with any other European power.

Imperialism had to be as sleek as the biblical serpent of the Garden of Eden at this stage for success depended upon the art of cunningness and deceitfulness. Perham and Bull (1963) and cited in Boahen (1987, p.38) write that in his diary, Lord Lugard, one of the most respected British colonial admitted a typical trick played by the British East African Company on the Kabaka of Buganda in 1892 as follows.

*No man if he understood it would sign it, and to say that a savage chief has been told that he cedes all rights to the company in exchange for nothing is an obvious untruth. If he had been told that the Company will protect him against his enemies, and share in his wars as an ally, he has been told a lie, for the Company have no idea of doing any such thing and no force to do it with if they wished.*

Lord Lugard’s diary conveys the clear message that the treaties were nothing but lies written on paper with the intention of deceiving African rulers to pave the way for depriving them of their sovereignty. Because there were many rulers in each African state, the conclusion of the treaties with separate rulers rather than with the states to which they belonged meant that colonial boundaries would not necessarily coincide with African state boundaries. Thus, the treaties themselves served as clever instruments for dividing and weakening African states to make their conquest easier. Indeed, the colonial boundaries drawn later by the European

powers cut across families, clans, and ethnic societies dividing, weakening, marginalizing and confusing them. The artificiality of these boundaries constitute the source of border disputes in Africa today and the irredentist claims of Somalia against its neighbors that led to the Ogaden war with Ethiopia in which African blood was heavily shed.

The second stage involved the signing of bilateral treaties between the European powers in which boundaries of their intended colonies were defined according to the treaties signed in the first stage. Being an integral part of the part of the conspiracy, no African ruler was invited to the drawing tables at which these boundaries were fixed. In the third stage, the same European powers who signed the treaties of protection with the African rulers were to renege on their promises and move in armies treacherously to subdue and colonize the same people they promised to protect. That was and bloody phase of the conspiracy. It was at this stage that African rulers were to realize too late that imperialism had a forked tongue with which it deceives and plays tricks, and that to an imperialist no treaty is ever to be honored.

### **THE IDEOLOGY OF WHITE MAN'S BURDEN**

Although colonialism was to satisfy the interests of the European powers, the imperialist conspirators thought it wise to present it to their own people and to the whole world that it was a burden undertaken by the white man to civilize Africans. The colonial experience raises serious questions about this claim. Do you civilize people against their will? Do you civilize people by robbing them of their land and giving it to your own? Do you civilize people by subjecting them to forced labour? Do you civilize people by denying them credit and paying them wages so low that they become marginalized? Do you civilize people by robbing them of their natural resources and invest little in return? Do you civilize people through policies which prevent them from becoming entrepreneurs? Do you civilize people by discriminating against them in a racist colour bar process including apartheid? Do you civilize people by forcing them to die fighting your wars? Since Africa became a victim of all these practices to the benefit of the imperialists, it is the African who suffered greatly through blood, toil, and sweat in bearing the white man's burden. Furthermore, the Europeans had no mandate from the Africans to come and civilize them.

However, in selling this ideology of white man's burden, the European powers found the Church as an effective ideological apparatus<sup>1</sup> and some Africans who had been converted to Christianity as their agents. These misguided Africans who mostly did not belong to the ruling classes of Africa were indoctrinated by the Church into believing that the European imperialists were their Christian brothers on a civilizing mission in Africa. It was in recognition of this ideological role of the Church in the colonizing process that James Coleman (1958) pointed out that the Christian missionaries were "the front troops of the Government to soften the hearts of the people and while people look at the Cross white men gather the riches of the land." (p.108). In their delusion that through colonialism the future image of their countries would be that of Europe, many of these African Christians were transformed into puppets of imperialism, and in alliance with their white missionaries encouraged imperialism in its adventure of colonizing Africa. African Moslems on the other hand regarded the imperialists as infidels who must be resisted. What about the African rulers themselves?

Most African rulers belonged to the indigenous pantheistic religion of Africa. They viewed the colonizing process as a betrayal of trust by Europeans and an encroachment upon their sovereignty. However, like the serpent of the Garden of Eden imperialism was very cunning. Through a combination of its forked tongue and divide and rule tactics, and taking advantage of enmity among African states arising from hostilities of the era of the European slave trade in Africans, it succeeded in converting some African leaders into puppets and playing one African leader against the other. However, evidence abounds in support of the view that African rulers had no intention of surrendering their sovereignty and that they were tricked into signing treaties in European languages which they did not fully comprehend. For example, in Ethiopia's treaty of friendship with Italy, the Amharic version was to the effect that Ethiopia could negotiate with other European powers through Italy, but in the Italian version the words were changed to make it obligatory for Ethiopia to negotiate with any European country through Italy only. Adu Boahen (1987) notes that based upon the Italian version which embodied the trick, Italy declared Ethiopia an Italian protectorate to which Emperor Menelik objected in the following words.

*When I made that treaty of friendship with Italy, in order that our secrets be guarded and that our understanding should not be spoiled I said that because of our friendship our affair in Europe might be carried on with the aid of the sovereign of Italy but I have not made any treaty which obliges me to do so, and today, I am not the man to accept it. That one independent power does not seek the aid of another to carry on its affairs your majesty understands very well. (p.54)*

Despite Ethiopia's objection, Italy with the backing of Britain would not budge until its humiliating defeat in the battle of Adowa in January 1896 in which Italy learnt the hard way that an equally armed African army is no way inferior.

Driven by the economic necessities of capitalism and prestige arising from fanatical nationalism, the imperialist conspirators were determined to colonize Africans by force and they were encouraged by the technological superiority and the military advantage derived from it. The industrial revolution had provided Europe with the military arsenals including advanced canons and the maxim machine gun to which Africans armed with muskets, spears, arrows and amulets had no effective answer. The resolve of the European powers to colonize Africa on one hand and the determination of African rulers to protect their sovereignty on the other hand meant that the interests of imperialism could not be achieved through colonialism without heavy shedding of much African blood.

### **THE BLOODY IMPOSITION**

The forked-tongue imperialists who promised Africans protection moved in their trained armies after the drawing of boundaries in the second stage of their Berlin conspiracy to conquer and subjugate the same Africans they promised to protect in the treaties. They calculated that process would be bloody, and they prepared very well to minimize the

spilling of European blood. They allied themselves with certain African societies from where they recruited and paid large numbers of Africans to serve in their armies. Only the few officers who commanded these armies were Europeans. Because these Africans mercenaries were not used to attack their own societies but other African societies they regarded traditionally as their enemies or foreign to them, they had no incentive to turn their guns on their white commanders. The clever military machination ensured that on both sides of any battle, the casualties would be principally African. It implied essentially that African blood was to be shed to achieve imperialist goals.

The ensuing conquest was so bloody that some African rulers, on hearing about what had happened elsewhere, surrendered without a fight. Even those who surrendered without a fight, including king Prempeh I of Ashanti were given a hard time. Egyptian resistance led by Colonel Ahmad Urabi in the defence of Alexandria in 1882 resulted in the loss of 2000 men on the Egyptian side alone. The battle of Atbara in 1898 against the British, 3000 Sudanese were killed and more than 4000 were wounded, and in another battle at Karari in 1899, 11,000 Sudanese were killed and 1,600 wounded (Boahen, 1987, pp 48-57). The blood of thousands of Africans was brutally shed in the numerous areas of the continent where the rulers defended their sovereignty. How this degree of brutality constitutes, a civilizing or Christian mission remains a question to be answered by the imperial powers of Europe. The Church in particular has to answer the searching question “When did the Prince of Peace become the Prince of War?”

Despite the heavy shedding of blood to impose colonialism, the image of Africa did not become the image of Europe during the colonial period. Instead, African human and material resources contributed to the development of the West as a whole and to the post-war reconstruction in Europe<sup>2</sup>. Under colonialism, the diversified economies of pre-colonial African states were transformed into cash crop and mono-crop economies that provided raw materials to feed industries located in the imperial metropolises. That is why most African economies today are vulnerable to price fluctuations in the world market. Inter-African trade was killed. Before colonialism, Africans freely roamed the continent without any requirement for visa but now they do. It was freedom to travel that promoted trade and development in pre-colonial Africa. When it is considered that, for the same reasons, there is no requirement for visa today among the European countries which colonized Africa; it becomes evident that colonialism established structures for the underdevelopment of the continent which are difficult to dismantle despite independence. It confirms the view that colonialism was not intended to make the future image of Africa the image of Western Europe. Although it cannot be denied that roads, railways and other infrastructure such as medical and educational institutions were established, these were parsimonious and negligible compared to what imperialism extracted from the continent or what was invested elsewhere in the former colonies of Asia, United States, Canada, and South America. Africa is now the most underdeveloped continent in the world with political and economic crises. The evidence shows that colonialism was neither a civilizing mission nor a white man’s burden.

## **NOMINAL INDEPENDENCE VERSUS DECOLONIZATION**

The grant of nominal independence to the colonial-created African states has so far failed to reverse the deepening of Africa's underdevelopment. Independence did not mean decolonization for on the eve of independence the structures which perpetuated the colonial relationship remained and continue to exist today. Indeed, on the eve of the grant of independence the imperialists clapped their hands with joy for they simply renamed the colonial structures neocolonial structures and were happy that the inexperienced African leaders did not perceive it so. Decolonization means the breaking down of the colonial structures and their replacement with new ones oriented to nationalist interests. That has so far not occurred anywhere in Africa. The persistence of the colonial boundaries themselves testify that the imperialist monster is still alive in Africa with its claws as sharp as ever and that Africa has not been decolonized.

Decolonization did not take place precisely because it was not in the economic and geopolitical interests of the colonial masters for that to happen. These interests demanded the existence of African states weak enough politically and economically to be dominated so that the exploitative colonial relationship might continue. To the former colonial masters, the logic of the cold war at the time demanded the continued tutelage of independent African countries to ensure that they did not fall into the communist camp. It was in the context of the combination of these economic and geopolitical rationalities that on the eve of independence African countries, deliberately rendered economically, politically, and economically weak by imperialism, did not become decolonized states but neocolonies heavily dependent for their survival on the same imperialists they so condemned in the independence struggle. The assassination of Patrice Lumumba (the Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo), and the overthrow of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (the President of the Republic of Ghana) in the 1960s who were both committed to genuine decolonization of the African continent, and the conspicuous propping up of Mobutu in power by the West in the Republic of the Congo were steps in the direction of maintaining the economic and geopolitical interests of Western imperialism.

Western countries may be champions in imperialism but it is a big mistake to regard them as the only imperialists of the modern world. Despite Lenin's condemnation of Western imperialism, the former Soviet Union was also imperialist. Soviet imperialism came to the fore during the World War Two when under the guise of liberating Europe from German imperialism; the Soviet Union established its own brand of imperialism. After incorporating countries in Europe and Asia including Estonia and Latvia into its bosom, the Soviet Union proceeded to turn countries in Eastern Europe including Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany into its imperialist satellites. Like neocolonies, outwardly, these satellites appeared to have all the appearances and trappings of independent states that freely signed the Warsaw Pact. In reality, they were under the yoke and shackles of Soviet imperialism. The Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising, its later invasion of Czechoslovakia to restore order, and the demise of the Warsaw Pact after the collapse of the Soviet Union while its former rival, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), remained and continues to expand are facts which substantiate the view that the Soviet satellites were not really free. Soviet imperialism and its search for neocolonies were not limited to Europe.

## **THE BEGINNING AND INTENSIFICATION OF THE SECOND SCRAMBLE**

During the cold war, the Arab-Israeli conflict of the 1960s, and the liberation wars against Portuguese imperialism in Africa, Soviet imperialism turned its attention to Africa where it was seen as an ally against Western imperialism in Egypt, Angola, Mozambique, Somalia, and later Ethiopia. This marked the beginning of the second scramble for Africa. Having won Cuba as an ally against western imperialism everywhere, the Soviet Union used Cuban troops as its surrogates effectively in Angola and Ethiopia to foster its imperialist interests. Africa became the ground where some of the cold war battles between Western imperialism and Soviet imperialism were fought. Both Western and Soviet imperialism in Africa were evil. However, during the cold war, Western imperialism in Africa might be said to be relatively an imperialism with a human face when compared to Soviet imperialism for while Soviet imperialism supplied Africans with only arms, Western imperialism supplied food and medicine in addition to arms.

The demise of the cold war and the break up of the Soviet Union did not bring an end to the second scramble for Africa. It was rather intensified. The demise of the cold war has encouraged the fusion of Western imperialism with imperialism emanating from the former Soviet states in such a manner that the two cooperate. Because of economic necessities, it is now very difficult to deny that even Russia has become subservient in its dealing with the West. The weakened economies of some of the former the Soviet states have compelled them to find markets to sell quantities of their stocks of conventional weapons. For example, in its last budget, Russia announced its intention to increase its arms sales by 20 percent and the Ukraine has been accused by Sierra Leone for selling arms to the rebels in that country. Arms companies in the West were also interested in selling their stocks of weapons. Plagued by political instability, border disputes, and rebellion in several areas including the Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Uganda, the Republic of the Congo, and Angola, Africa has become a fertile ground in a scramble to sell arms for the spilling of African blood.

Africa's role as a price-taker in the oligopolistic international market means the fluctuation of the prices of its goods to satisfy imperialist interests. The economic stresses arising from these fluctuations are easily translated into political crises by demagogues who turn themselves into leaders of rebellions. The harsh structural adjustment conditionalities of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have aggravated these economic and political crises and deepened the scramble to sell arms to Africa for economic gain. When it is considered that the states of the former Soviet Union were not involved in the first scramble for Africa, their involvement in the second scramble means that the suffering of the African in bearing the White-man's burden has increased.

Available evidence shows that the strategy of imperialism to shed African blood for its economic gain using African recruits and puppets remains essentially unchanged in this second scramble. By their deeds, Mobutu of the Republic of the Congo, Museveni of Uganda, Savimbi of Angola, Generals Kotoka and Afrifa and Flight Lieutenant Rawlings of Ghana, Colonel Ojukwu and General Abacha of Nigeria, Colonel Mengistu of Ethiopia, Generals Siad Barre and Aidid of Somalia, and Foday Sanko of Sierra Leone through whom much African blood has been shed are knowingly or unknowingly puppets or agents of either Western or Soviet imperialism. Through clever manipulation and effective use of its



forked tongue, imperialism is able to deceive leaders of Africa's rebellions into thinking of themselves as patriots and nationalists pursuing some noble cause. In reality, these leaders shed African blood to satisfy imperialist interests.

Like the first scramble, political actors in Africa have failed to perceive this second scramble and its agenda of establishing neocolonies for the exploitation of the human and material resources of the continent. The arms being poured in are not for free. They have to be paid for after much shedding of African blood. As the spilling of African blood proceeds, the resources of Africa, including diamonds and gold, are obtained by imperialism through the toil and sweat of other Africans in exchange for weapons. Furthermore, the impetus for selling arms to Africa in this process of neocolonization requires the continuous and unscrupulous encouragement of violent conflict in the continent by the agents of imperialism. Meanwhile, the United Nations with a similar forked tongue as its imperialist masters plays the role of some passive spectator and lip-service provider.

The United Nations is unable to stop imperialism from creating or encouraging the conditions conducive to selling arms to Africa because, in reality, it is a Divided Nations Organization (DNO) designed principally to serve imperialist interests. If it were an organization of nations that are united, as its name implies, there would not have been any need for a Security Council with permanent members that exercise veto power. The existence of member countries with veto powers reveals how divided and discriminating that organization is. The Security Council is dominated by the imperialist powers who ensure that the United Nations acts in the interest of imperialism. Africans should make no mistake. The United Nations serves principally the interests of imperialism. That is why it was quick to respond to the crisis Bosnia, but slow to respond to the genocide in Rwanda. For the same reason, it is very concerned with the scores killed in Kosovo, but pays lip-service to the thousands killed or maimed in Sierra Leone, Angola, and the Republic of the Congo.

However, the United Nations is not the only international organization that serves principally the interest of imperialism in this second scramble for Africa. International organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank and the Church knowingly or unknowingly serve the interest of imperialism. A typical example is the spectacular roles which the IMF and the World Bank, American private enterprise, and the United States government played in creating the conditions that led to the Rwandan genocide. Through no fault of Rwanda, its economy was transformed by imperialism in its colonial expression into a mono-crop coffee economy very vulnerable to price fluctuations in the world market. In 1989, American business wishing to maximize profit exerted pressure on the American government to abrogate the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) which stabilized the price of coffee.

The abrogation of the ICA resulted in a plummeting of the price of coffee which threw Rwanda's mono-crop economy into disarray. The Catholic Church in Rwanda was aware that it was the abrogation of the ICA that precipitated the economic crisis. However, as a faithful ideological apparatus of imperialism, it diverted attention from the consequences of that abrogation on to blaming the economic crisis openly on alleged corrupt practices within the Rwandan government. If the Church knew all along that corruption was going on within the Rwandan government, why did it wait until the abrogation of the ICA precipitated a

crisis before complaining? Undeniably, the Church has both political clout and influence in the imperialist world and was aware of the problems its calculated behaviour might create for the Rwandan government in those circles.

The attitude, activities, and influence of the Church undermined the genuine efforts of the Rwandan government in addressing the situation. In order to bring the crisis under control, the government invited the IMF and the World Bank for a structural adjustment package. The IMF and the World Bank were aware of the delicate political situation in Rwanda, the threat of invasion from the Revolutionary Patriotic Front (RPF), and the aggravation of the political situation arising from the economic crisis. Despite this awareness, these international financial institutions imposed very harsh structural adjustment conditionalities on Rwanda that deepened the crisis further and encouraged the RPF to invade the country from its bases in Uganda. It was when Habyarimana, the Rwandan President, was returning from negotiating some peace agreement with the rebels that his plane was shot down and sparked the genocide. The Rwandan genocide is therefore not due so much to inter-clan rivalry between Hutu and Tutsi, for thousands of both Hutus and Tutsis were victims of it. The agents of imperialism and capitalism had a dirty hand in it.

The agents of imperialism include multinationals and other private enterprises. As capitalist private enterprise, acting as the agent of imperialism, was deeply involved in the first scramble for Africa during the nineteenth century so is it deeply involved in this second scramble. Despite the outward condemnation of armed conflict in Africa by the Security Council, private companies from the same countries that effectively constitute the Council are deeply involved in supplying arms, trainers, and mercenaries to both sides of most conflicts.

The *New African* ( 1999) in its January publication, gave a detailed account of how imperialist governments and capitalist private enterprise are deeply involved in the pouring of arms into Africa and in the training both government and of rebel forces. The cover page of that article carried the following words which throw light on the character of the on-going scramble.

*Arms are pouring into Africa from every source - arm dealers, mercenaries, security firms, even governments trying to pursue their individual agendas. As the guerrilla wars spread across frontiers and the Congo becomes a bloody battle ground, the opportunities for the dogs of war and the traders in death continue to expand adding to the blood bath.*  
(p.10)

The bloodbath refers to the shedding of African blood in the second scramble for Africa by imperialism in its neocolonial expression. The arms dealers and security firms are private companies from imperialist countries including member countries that constitute the Security Council. The governments referred to are imperialist governments of both the West and the former Soviet states including Russia, the Ukraine, the United States, Britain and France.

They are all seeking neocolonies in Africa for their economic and geopolitical interests. The white mercenaries are mainly from the same imperialist countries.

Mercenaries are not solely from imperialist countries. There are misguided Africans also serving as mercenaries. For example, there are Liberian mercenaries fighting on the side of the rebels in Sierra Leone. As in the first scramble imperialism cleverly recruited and armed African mercenaries to fight against African states to establish colonialism so in the second scramble it has succeeded in recruiting and arming misguided Africans acting as rebels to fight against African governments to establish neocolonies. As imperialism minimized the spilling of European blood in the first scramble so in the second. The forked tongue of imperialism is also displayed in the new scramble. In an article published by the *Times of London* in January 1999 captioned *British Firms Arming Sierra Leonean Rebels*, the activities of a former KGB officer, Victor Bout in transferring military equipment from Liberia and the Gambia to Sierra Leone were revealed and so was the hypocrisy and forked tongue of the British Parliament.

The same British Parliament which continues to be so vocal against violation of a United Nations arms embargo by Sideline International for its shipment of some small quantity of arms to the democratically elected and legitimate government of President Kabbah to help defend itself against the rebels remains silent on the shipment of large quantities of arms by British companies to the rebels. The arms to the rebels were being paid for dearly with Sierra Leonean diamonds and African blood. The relative silence of the British Parliament on the issue might as well be an indication that some parliamentarians might be benefiting directly or indirectly from it. Did the United Nations really mean that arms should not be supplied to the legitimate government of Sierra Leone to defend itself against the rebels or to ECOMOG to maintain peace and order in that country? Is the government of Sierra Leone not recognized by the United Nations?

The forked tongue of imperialism acting behind the scenes is difficult to deny. Indeed, instead of arming ECOMOG and providing it with the logistic support it required to defend the democratically elected government, Britain and the United States with economic investment in Sierra Leone, and with ample knowledge that the rebels had been armed to the teeth and poised to attack Freetown, in December 1998, withdrew their nationals from that city. Unfortunately, after ECOMOG and the rebels have shed Nigerian, Guinean, Ghanaian, Malian, and Sierra Leonean blood in thousands, it is these same imperialists who will continue to own the diamond concessions and benefit from the profits derived. Indeed, as African blood flows, the imperialist are busy planning how to share the diamond concessions of Sierra Leone among themselves. This attitude of imperialism shows that its preaching of liberal democracy in Africa is only a smoke-screen for creating the appropriate instability conditions for the realization of its economic agenda. Because of its behaviour in Africa and the prevailing conditions of misery on the continent, it is difficult to deny that imperialism is fundamentally indifferent to the spilling of African blood and to the sufferings and sorrows of Africans.

The enlargement of the imperialist camp in the second scramble has aggravated the sorrows of the African continent. Mercenaries from the Ukraine have been caught in Sierra Leone

fighting on the side of the rebels. Recently, an intelligence officer of UNITA, the rebel organization fighting against the Angolan government, confessed in detail how that organization received arms and training from the Russians. Ethiopia and Eritrea are both known to be procuring arms from Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe to prosecute their senseless border war. According to the regional expert of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Patric Gike (1999), “Neither side has any pilots qualified for the new planes. They are being flown by pilots from Russia, Ukraine or Latvia and both are using Russian technicians for the maintenance.”

Apart from the former Soviet States participating in the scramble, post-apartheid South Africa continues to engage in the supply of arms to the embarrassment of Africans who had hoped that the demise of apartheid and the rise of fellow Africans to power would afford that country the opportunity to play a leading and constructive role in the development of the continent. South Africa is known to have supplied weapons to both sides (New African, 1999, p. 12) of conflicts in Africa to satisfy its economic interests which are allied with the interests of imperialism as a whole. Identified South African companies involved in the training and sale of arms include Alpha 5, Frontier risks, and Executive Outcomes. When it is considered that connections of Executive Outcomes include Heritage Oil & Gas, Ranger Oil, Branch Resources, Stuart Mills International, Shibata Security, and Falconer, the picture becomes clear that international capital is deeply involved in the process of spilling African blood for profit. It is a great shame to the African continent that post-apartheid South Africa is engaged in destabilizing Africa for economic gain. The message that country sends to the rest of Africa is “*Apartheid may appear to be dead but its imperialist soul marches on*”.

Knowingly or unknowingly, the Church also marches on in its role as an ally of imperialism. As the it acted as the ideological apparatus of the state in the first scramble for Africa so it is in this second scramble. Because of the stresses, strains, suffering and sorrows arising from the deepening of political and economic crisis as imperialism gathers the riches of Africa, many Africans have turned to the Church for salvation. Apart from the orthodox churches, many Pentecostal or spiritual churches have sprang up which are allied or linked with similar organizations in the imperialist West. These churches preach in various ways about an impending dooms day and the need to concentrate on God rather than material things in order to achieve salvation. It is to these churches that many misguided Africans have flocked. As Coleman explained in the case of the first scramble, it is through these churches that imperialism is able to soften the hearts of Africans and direct them to look upon the Cross as its agents “gather the riches of the land.” (Coleman, 1958, p.108)

Some members of these churches are credited to be endowed with the supernatural powers which enable them to see visions of the future, heal, and perform miracles similar to biblical days. In their sufferings and sorrows members of these churches are taught to fast for several days and in the process many become psychotic. Indeed, in these churches, the more schizophrenic a person is to see hallucinations, the more prophetic power or supernatural power he or she is believed to possess. Thus, Foday Sanko - the rebel leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) - responsible for the maiming and killing of thousands in Sierra Leone is supposed to be endowed with such supernatural powers. That is why he has been able to send thousands to their death. Members of these churches believe that Western

countries are the leading Christian countries of the world. Little do they know that very few people in the West attend church, and that the secularized Western countries consider material things as the most sensible salvation. Indeed, the spirit that animates both imperialism and capitalism is profit which is symbolized by the golden image of Nebuchadnezer<sup>3</sup> with Mammon as god. Surely this is not Christianity, and that view is buttressed by the fact that the record of imperialism and capitalism in Africa is so bloody.

Christianity teaches people to love their neighbours as themselves and surely that teaching is to the benefit of the total human race. On the contrary, the bloody record of imperialists and international capitalists in their dealings with Africans and people of African descent everywhere so far shows that they do not love Africans as themselves. Their attitude is far from being Christian. Meanwhile, the ideological softening of the hearts of Africans that God is capable of dropping manna from heaven, able to solve all problems of those who call upon him, and the call for abstention from material things of this world serve as disincentives to Africans to think rationally about how to harness the material endowments of the continent to advantage. Africans are being fooled. As Africans despise material things, clap their hands and sing hallelujah, the agents of imperialism and capitalism are busy enriching themselves through the blood, toil and sweat, of the same Africans.

Imperialists and capitalists never willfully go to Africa to help Africans for no monopoly capitalist ever sets out to create other capitalists to increase competition. That is why the world market is oligopolistic. Africans should make no mistake, character of imperialism and capitalism is not Christian, humanitarian, or good-Samaritan. Their agents enter Africa principally to help themselves. Their equipment, arms, and activities are geared to profit-making. Until Africans recognize and accept this reality about imperialism, stop fighting against one another or among themselves, and in unity resolve to direct the human and material resources of the continent to their own development, Africa's future will be deplorable .

## **CONCLUSION**

African blood was shed in the interest of imperialism during first scramble which led to the partition of Africa into colonies of the European powers. Ideologically, the first scramble was disguised as the white-man's burden of a historically civilizing mission in Africa. The colonial experience however showed that the African had to suffer dearly to bear the white-man's burden. African human and material resources contributed to the development of Europe while continent was continuously underdeveloped. A second bloody scramble for Africa began during the cold war when the Soviet Union extended its imperialist interests to Africa. The demise of the cold war and the break up of the Soviet Union did not end this scramble. Instead, the imperialist camp for the scramble for Africa has enlarged leading to a flood of arms from both East and West to the continent and blood bath.

The United Nations which was active in Bosnia and is active in Kosovo is a passive spectator in the African scene despite its condemnation of the blood bath. This is not surprising given that the United Nations is imperialist designed, imperialist controlled and essentially imperialist. The involvement of post-apartheid South Africa in this blood bath is a shame and an embarrassment to Africans who had hoped that South Africa might play a

constructive role in the development of the continent. In both the first and second scrambles, African Christians have been disillusioned into thinking that the secular developed countries of the West are Christian countries. This has enabled the Church to be used as an ideological apparatus of imperialism to soften the hearts of Africans and direct them to look at the Cross while imperialists “gather the riches of the land.” Until Africans recognize and accept the reality that neither imperialism nor capitalism is fundamentally Christian, humanitarian, or good-Samaritan, stop fighting against one another or among themselves, and in unity resolve to direct the human and material resources of the continent to their own development, Africa’s future will be very bleak.

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### NOTES

1. Louis Althusser, a French philosopher argued that ideology is not an illusion but a social practice in which the Church acts as an effective ideological apparatus in creating social relations. In the colonization process, the role of the Church was to preach the need for subservience of the African rulers and the masses to the colonizing forces who, in the pretended eyes of the Church, were agents appointed by God to civilize the continent. Thus, the Church played its role in creating a vertical mosaic of racism in which Europeans were at the very top and Africans at the very bottom.
2. Walter Rodney (1982) provides a more detailed account of how the resources of Africa contributed to the development of Europe in such a manner that the underdevelopment of Africa and the development of Europe became opposite sides of the same coin. The interested reader is referred to that book.
3. In the book of Daniel in the Bible, Nebuchadnezer, the king of Babylon was said to have made a golden image and commanded all in his empire to bow down and worship it. Mammon is the god of those who love money. The golden image of Nebuchadnezer is used here as a symbol or the physical image of the spirit Mammon. When capitalists and imperialists see this symbol or physical image of Nebuchadnezer in the form of a potential for material riches, they are animated to crave for money or profit more than any thing else, and in the process worship Mammon.

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