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## BACKGROUND AND REASONS FOR THE COLONIAL EXPANSION OF EUROPEAN STATES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

**Abstract. Purpose.** *The goal is to reveal and analyze the historical prerequisites and reasons for the colonial expansion of European states on the African continent in the context of the formation of the world colonial system, to characterize the main ideological concepts of colonialism and their influence on the specifics of colonization processes in Africa.*

**Scientific novelty.** *An attempt was made to comprehensively reveal and analyze the ideological concepts, prerequisites and reasons for the colonial expansion of European states on the African continent with the involvement of a wide array of scientific works of foreign historiography on this issue.*

**Result.** *It was found that certain ideological concepts (mercantilism, free trade, protectionism) influenced the formation of the colonial policy of European states in Africa. One of the reasons for the European colonization of Africa was the demand for natural resources and cheap labor. Industrialization, which developed rapidly and spread throughout Europe, needed raw materials, since in the second half of the 19th century almost all European countries, which until then were in a state of catch-up industrialization, reached a new level of industrial development. Another reason was the need for sales markets, and this motive was mainly determined by industrialists. They encouraged their governments to colonize the African continent to secure markets for their manufactured goods. An equally important reason was the effort of Europeans to civilize Africa, so missionary work and free trade were seen as ways to speed up the process of enculturation of African peoples. The development of scientific research in the second half of the 19th century also contributed to the emergence of ideas of colonial expansion in the European environment.*

**Key words:** *colonialism, Africa, ideological concepts of colonialism, mercantilism, colony, metropolis.*

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## ПЕРЕДУМОВИ ТА ПРИЧИНИ КОЛОНІАЛЬНОЇ ЕКСПАНСІЇ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКИХ ДЕРЖАВ НА АФРИКАНСЬКОМУ КОНТИНЕНТІ

**Анотація. Мета** – розкрити та проаналізувати історичні передумови і причини колоніальної експансії європейських держав на Африканському континенті у контексті формування світової колоніальної системи, охарактеризувати основні ідеологічні концепції колоніалізму та їхній вплив на специфіку колонізаційних процесів в Африці.

**Наукова новизна.** Зроблено спробу комплексного розкриття та аналізу ідеологічних концепцій, передумов та причин колоніальної експансії європейських держав на Африканському континенті із залученням широкого масиву наукових напрацювань зарубіжної історіографії з даної проблематики.

**Висновки.** З'ясовано, що процес створення світової колоніальної системи мав свою етапність та ідеологічні концепції (меркантилізм, фритредерство, протекціонізм), що впливали, зокрема, і на формування колоніальної політики європейських держав в Африці. Однією з причин європейської колонізації Африки, був попит на природні ресурси та дешеву робочу силу. Індустріалізація, яка швидко розвивалася і поширювалася в усій Європі, потребувала сировини, оскільки у другій половині XIX ст. майже всі європейські країни, які до того часу перебували в стані наздоганяючої індустріалізації, вийшли на новий рівень індустріального розвитку. Іншою причиною була потреба в ринках збуту, і цей мотив в основному визначався промисловцями. Вони закликали свої уряди колонізувати африканський континент, щоб забезпечити ринки для своїх промислових товарів. Не менш важливою причиною було намагання європейців цивілізувати Африку, тому місіонерство, вільна торгівля розглядалися як способи пришвидшення процесу окультурнення африканських народів. Зародженню ідей колоніальної експансії в європейському середовищі сприяв також і розвиток наукових досліджень другої половини XIX ст.

**Ключові слова:** колоніалізм, Африка, ідеологічні концепції колоніалізму, меркантилізм, фритредерство, протекціонізм, колонія, метрополія.

**Problem statement.** Most of the trends in the historical development of humanity can be traced and analyzed only by turning to the historical past, in particular to the history of colonialism in the countries of the traditional East, their struggle for their independence, the influence of colonial management methods of metropolitan countries on changes in the socio-economic and political spheres of development traditional Eastern societies, decolonization processes and post-colonial development of states that have gained independence. Today, countries of the third world, especially the African continent, which is an organic part of the development of the modern political, economic and cultural process, attract a lot of attention of the world community. The Africa we see today is largely determined by the factors that influenced its history literally a century and a half ago. It is necessary to take into account the lessons of history in order to look clearly into the future. In the era of globalization, historical prerequisites have an actual scientific and socio-political significance. They are related to the solution of a wide range of problems by modern sovereign African states and to the changing arrangement of political forces in the world.

The phenomenon of colonialism in the historical past is a step-by-step process of development, enslavement and exploitation of conquered lands, their subsoil and labor force by the largest metropolises, the formation of colonial empires, the formation of the world economy and the world colonial system during several centuries of the modern era. Colonialism caused a global transformation of the deep parameters of life in the traditional East. It was under the conditions of the world colonial system that Afro-Asian history began to acquire new modern features. In the 17th - at the beginning of the 18th centuries. the traditional East rather quickly fell into a long-term, protracted crisis, and then generally became an easy target for capitalist expansion by the countries of the West. The world has changed, but the traditional East was unwilling and unable to adapt to it in a timely manner. A colonial system is being formed, within which a number of Western metropolitan countries and a large number of dependent countries of the East, for the

first time in the history of mankind, created a single system of the world capitalist economy on the basis of the formed single world economic market.

**Research analysis.** European expansion and colonisation have had a well-known and controversial impact on the socio-economic and socio-political structures of the Afro-Asian region. Most aspects of this vast issue have already been studied in foreign and domestic specialised literature. At the same time, there are still many controversial issues in the national historical science, as well as insufficiently comprehensively researched problems, including those related to the causes, nature and extent of the colonial expansion of European states in each of the regions of Africa.

Foreign historiography investigated the issue of the distribution of Africa more thoroughly and gave a more insightful interpretation of the given topic than domestic historiography of the soviet and modern periods. Research devoted to the chosen topic can be divided into several categories: firstly, it is a study of the economic reasons that pushed European countries to intensify the conquest of new territories, in particular, the works of English scientists, historians and economists - R. Walter<sup>1</sup>, J. Gallagher and R. Robinson<sup>2</sup>, P. Kane and T. Hopkins<sup>3</sup>. Also, foreign historiography outlined the main policy vectors carried out by leading European countries, this was reflected in the works of M. Rapport<sup>4</sup>, N. Ferguson<sup>5</sup>, K. Shillington<sup>6</sup>, T. Stapleton<sup>7</sup>. The works of the American historian who specializes in colonialization, decolonization and the history of Africa, F. Cooper, became interesting for research<sup>8</sup>. Familiarity with scientific works on the history of Africa by modern Spanish historians P. Arconada-Ledesma and C. Garcia Andres became useful for this scientific investigation<sup>9</sup>.

The 8-volume volume released with the assistance of Unesco cannot be overlooked – “General History of Africa”<sup>10</sup> volume 7 was used in this study. The “Encyclopedia of Western Colonialism since 1450” and “Encyclopedia of African history and culture. Volume IV. The Colonial Era (1850 to 1960) contains the essential comprehensive resource on the subject of colonialism and expansion”<sup>11</sup>.

Certain aspects of the colonial expansion of European states on the African continent were highlighted in the scientific works of soviet historians, including R. Brodskiy and E. Enolskiy, E. Yurovska, I. Nikitina and others<sup>12</sup>. In particular, the workshop edited by K. Yurovska contains source materials related to the colonial policy of European states on the African continent.

<sup>1</sup>Rodney Walter. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa. London : Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications/Dar-Es-Salaam: Tanzanian Publishing House, 1972. URL : <https://abahlali.org/files/3295358-walter-rodney.pdf>; A History of the Upper Guinea Coast 1545–1800 / By Walter Rodney. Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1970. 283 p. URL : [https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/31255/1/Rodney\\_History\\_Upper\\_Guinea\\_Coast.pdf](https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/31255/1/Rodney_History_Upper_Guinea_Coast.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>The Imperialism of Free Trade. John Gallagher; Ronald Robinson. The Economic History Review, New Series, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1953), 1-15. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2591017>

<sup>3</sup>Cain P. J. and Hopkins A. G. British Imperialism, 1688-2000. London and New York: Longman, 2001. 739 p.

<sup>4</sup>Rapport M. Nineteenth Century Europe. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 339 p.

<sup>5</sup>Ferguson N. Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power. New York: Best Books, 2004; Фергюсон Н. Цивілізація. Як захід став успішним / Пер. з англ. В. Циба. Київ: Наш Формат, 2017. 488 с.

<sup>6</sup>Shillington, Kevin. History of Africa: Revised Forth Edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic. 2018. 528 p. Retrieved from: <https://www.perlego.com/book/2996922/history-of-africa-pdf>

<sup>7</sup>Stapleton, T. (2016). Encyclopedia of African Colonial Conflicts [2 volumes] (1st ed.). Bloomsbury Publishing. 848 p. URL: <https://www.perlego.com/book/4203955/encyclopedia-of-african-colonial-conflicts-2-volumes-2-volumes-pdf>

<sup>8</sup>Cooper, F. (2005). *Colonialism in Question* (1st ed.). University of California Press. URL: <https://www.perlego.com/book/550590/colonialism-in-question-pdf>; Africa in the World: Capitalism, Empire, Nation-State / by Frederick Cooper. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014. URL: [https://www.academia.edu/79062798/Africa\\_in\\_the\\_world\\_capitalism\\_empire\\_nation\\_state\\_By\\_Frederick\\_Cooper](https://www.academia.edu/79062798/Africa_in_the_world_capitalism_empire_nation_state_By_Frederick_Cooper)

<sup>9</sup>Arconada-Ledesma P. Garcia Andres C. Colonial Conflicts in the Horn of Africa: From European Presence to Ethiopian Imperialism (1880-1930) / Examining Colonial Wars and Their Impact on Contemporary Military History. IGI Global, 2023. P. 51-68. URL: <https://books.google.es/books?hl=es&lr=&id=pAu4EAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA51&ots=SHoXWXRvsg&sig=SODHy6XIyqbh7isLQIJ0uRDrXA#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<sup>10</sup>UNESCO General History of Africa, Vol. VII, Abridged Edition: Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935. URL: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001842/184296geo.pdf>

<sup>11</sup>Encyclopedia of Western Colonialism since 1450. 3 Vol. / [Ed. by T. Benjamin]. Thomson Gale: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007. 1226 p. URL: [https://www.academia.edu/18641995/Encyclopedia\\_of\\_Western\\_Colonialism\\_since\\_1450\\_2007\\_3v](https://www.academia.edu/18641995/Encyclopedia_of_Western_Colonialism_since_1450_2007_3v); Encyclopedia of African history and culture. Volume IV. The Colonial Era (1850 to 1960) / edited by Willie F. Page; R. Hunt Davis, Jr., Editor. New York, 2005. 471 p. URL: [https://www.academia.edu/9175213/Encyclopedia\\_of\\_African\\_History\\_Vol\\_4](https://www.academia.edu/9175213/Encyclopedia_of_African_History_Vol_4)

<sup>12</sup>Бродський Р. М., Енольський З. А. Нова історія країни Азії і Африки. Львів, 1986; Колониальная политика капиталистических держав (1870-1914): практикум / сост. Е.Е. Юровская. Москва, 1967; Никитина И. А. Захват бурских республик Англией (1899-1902 гг.). Москва, 1970.

In domestic Ukrainian historical science, the problem of colonialism in Africa is investigated indirectly. However, there are significant comprehensive works on the history of the countries of Asia and Africa in the new and modern times, in which the colonial expansion of European states on the African continent is considered in the context of the history of the colonial East. Among modern Ukrainian researchers of the history of Africa in the period of colonialism, it is worth noting such researchers as V. Rubel and V. Golovchenko, O. Kovalkov and V. Filoretov, I. Pop and others.<sup>13</sup>

**The purpose of the article.** To investigate the prerequisites and reasons for colonial expansion leading European countries to the African continent during colonial conquests; to characterize the main ideological concepts of colonialism and the specifics of colonization processes in Africa.

**The statement of the basic material.** The colonial system changed in the process of the development of capitalism and the deployment of colonial expansion. Attempts to involve African territories in the world colonial system were different at stages of colonial expansion. For example, in the most backward regions of Black Africa, the imposition of colonial orders was accompanied by attempts to eliminate the entire complex of traditional socio-economic relations with the aim of their radical modernization in the interests of world capital. In the countries of North and East Africa, the semi-colonial method of enslavement combined the formal preservation of traditional socio-political structures of the eastern despotic type with economic and partly ideological, scientific, technical and social enslavement (Arab Africa, Ethiopia).

These different principles of colonial policy were based on the following different ideological concepts, that created the prerequisites for the colonial expansion of European states, in particular on the African continent: mercantilism; free trade; protectionism. Mercantilism as an economic policy of a number of European states of the 15th–18th centuries, which was based on foreign economic violence and was aimed at the accumulation of initial capital, also approved the slave trade. Rapid colonial expansion was facilitated by the dispersion and low level of development of African tribes, who became easy prey for the colonizers during the period of active slave trade.

Free trade is an economic policy of the industrial bourgeoisie, characterized by demands for free trade, elimination of customs barriers and other trade restrictions. An important aspect of free trade was the fight against the slave trade, since slave labor narrowed the domestic market, made it difficult to form a workforce, and prevented the emergence of large foreign markets. This movement had an international character and became an important feature of the social life of Great Britain, France, the USA and many other countries. Under pressure from opponents of slavery in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the world community legally prohibits slavery and the slave trade and begins a tough fight against it. It was at this time that the free African states of Sierra Leone and Liberia were formed on the African continent, the initiators of which sought to atone for the sins of the white race against the black race. It is also important that these formations were created as free settlements of free people.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries free trade has lost its meaning, giving way to protectionism. Protectionism is an economic policy of bourgeois states aimed at protecting national industry from foreign competition, as well as at seizing foreign markets. The era of rapid colonial distribution of the world has come.

The prerequisites and reasons for the deployment and further evolution of colonial expansion were closely related to the development of bourgeois-capitalist relations in Western countries. The 19th century was a period that witnessed radical changes in Europe's relations with Africa. Before the beginning of the great colonization in Africa from 1880s, some European countries (Portugal, Spain, the British Empire and France) had certain enclaves scattered across the continent, mainly port and coastal positions to control trade<sup>14</sup>. Gradually, conditions and bridgeheads were

<sup>13</sup>Рубель В. А. Нова історія Азії та Африки: Постсередньовічний Схід (XVIII – друга половина XIX ст.). Київ : Либідь, 2007. 560 с.; Головченко В. І., Рубель В. А. Нова історія країн Азії та Африки : Колоніальний Схід (кінець XIX – друга третина XX ст.). Київ : Либідь, 2010. 520 с.; Збірник документів з нової історії країн Азії та Африки / упоряд.: О. Ковальков, В. Філоретов. Кіровоград, 2012. 191 с.; Поп І. І. Нова історія країн Азії і Африки (XVI - поч. XX ст.). Київ : Академія, 2012. 376 с.

<sup>14</sup>Arconada-Ledesma P. Garcia Andres C. Colonial Conflicts in the Horn of Africa: From European Presence to Ethiopian Imperialism (1880-1930) / Examining Colonial Wars and Their Impact on Contemporary Military History. IGI Global, 2023. P. 51. URL: [https://books.google.es/books?hl=es&lr=&id=pAu4EAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA51&ots=SHoXWXRvsg&sig=\\_SODHy6XIyqbh7isLQIJ0uRDrXA#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.es/books?hl=es&lr=&id=pAu4EAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA51&ots=SHoXWXRvsg&sig=_SODHy6XIyqbh7isLQIJ0uRDrXA#v=onepage&q&f=false)

created for further colonial expansion with the aim of mastering its natural resources, cheap labor and sales markets. Of course, there were colonial disputes and latent colonial conflicts between the European states themselves for the best and richest region of Africa.

As is well known, Africa has had prolonged and extensive contact with Europe, and one has to bear in mind that contact between different societies changes their respective rates of development. The African continent reveals very fully the workings of the law of uneven development of societies. Owing to the differences in European and African culture, and owing to the potency and viciousness of the Atlantic slave trade, the Afro-European relationship incorporated violent contradictions<sup>15</sup>.

Among the reasons for the colonial expansion of European states on the African continent, we single out one of the economic factors. Surplus capital was more profitable to invest in overseas countries, where much cheaper labor, limited competition and rich raw materials created prospects and opportunities for high profits. The industrial revolution that the West experienced at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries significantly influenced the intensification of colonial expansion in Africa. African colonies are turning into agrarian and raw material appendages of metropolises with a planted monocultural commodity orientation of local plantation-agricultural and extractive industries, into sales markets for high-tech products produced by Western industry<sup>16</sup>.

British politicians always advocated unofficial expansion of the colonial empire, and this looked like a project of influence in Africa, Asia and South America through free trade. Where possible, diplomacy was preferred. In some colonies, where necessary, coercion was used to impose free trade conditions on an underdeveloped society against its will<sup>17</sup>. The “free trade” method has caused decades of controversy in science. The economic debate about this theory was really transformed in the 1980s and early 1990s with the publication of a major study by Peter Kane and Tony Hopkins called *British Imperialism*<sup>18</sup>. They argued that finance, financial elites and capital were indeed the driving force behind British colonial expansion.

It is worth noting that the birth of the ideas of colonial expansion was facilitated by the development of scientific studies of the second half of the 19th century. So, for example, in deployment and implementation colonial propaganda played a big role in all strata of German society was played by the public and military intelligentsia of Germany, which included missionaries and scientists, geographers and travelers, writers and publicists, civil servants and political figures. It is their activity in mass media information and various public organizations was a means of influence and pressure on the government, which pushed the ruling circles move on to colonial expansion<sup>19</sup>.

Germany began active colonial expansion in the 1880s. The national bourgeoisie in every possible way encouraged Chancellor Bismarck to do so. Germany eventually became the third largest metropolis in Africa, taking over the colonies of South West Africa, Togoland, Cameroon and Tanganyika. The competition for the division of Africa between European states led to the fact that Bismarck proposed to hold the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885. At this conference, diplomats of leading European countries discussed the humanitarian problems of Africa, condemned the slave trade, banned the sale of weapons in some colonies, and expressed concern about the safety of missionary activities. The result of the conference was that the diplomats agreed on certain conditions that the great powers must adhere to during colonization, in particular that no metropolis had the right to seize territories without notifying the others of its intentions and that no territory could be claimed without first occupying it.

The French colonial system differed from all other similar systems of European countries. While Germany and Belgium bet on brutality, England on indirect rule with the involvement of local elites, France tried to transfer European institutions to the colonies. English historian-economist Niall Ferguson in his book “*Civilization*” describes how France civilized its African

<sup>15</sup>A History of the Upper Guinea Coast 1545–1800 / By Walter Rodney. Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1970. P. 3 URL : [https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/31255/1/Rodney\\_History\\_Upper\\_Guinea\\_Coast.pdf](https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/31255/1/Rodney_History_Upper_Guinea_Coast.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Головченко В. І., Рубель В. А. Нова історія країн Азії та Африки : Колоніальний Схід (кінець XIX – друга третина XX ст.). Київ : Либідь, 2010. С. 10.

<sup>17</sup>The Imperialism of Free Trade. John Gallagher; Ronald Robinson. *The Economic History Review*, New Series. 1953. Vol. 6, no. 1. P. 1-15.

<sup>18</sup>P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1688-2000* (1st ed. published in two volumes in 1993; 2nd ed. in one volume, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> Заболотна Л. Л. Внесок німецької наукової думки 40-80 рр. XIX ст. у формування колоніальної політики Німеччини. *Сумська старовина*. 2009. № XXVI-XXVII. С. 84.

colonies already in the 19th century on the example of Senegal. In particular, Neil Ferguson observed: “At the beginning of the 15th century, the very idea that the West would dominate the rest of the world for the next five centuries would have seemed very strange. However, it happened”<sup>20</sup> Also French colonial expansion was characterized by the use of African colonies as a raw material appendage of an industrialized metropolis.

After Africa was colonized by Europeans, the latter learned that economic activity in Africa can be very diverse. A very positive thing that marked Africa was the extraction of minerals that it had in its bowels. Mineral resources are undoubtedly a plus for the economy. Large farms that took place in East and South Africa belonged to Europeans. For the most part, the economy in the conquered African countries depended on the mining industry, agriculture, in some regions they relied on a certain commodity culture.

The example of Ethiopia showed that the consolidation of African nations and the establishment of state centralization contributed to the protection of their independence and allowed them to resist colonial powers. For the peoples of the African continent, it was the most valuable historical experience. However, most African countries were unable to defend themselves due to the lack of quality weapons and military organization that the colonial conquerors had at that time. In some places, there was also a lack of national consciousness, due to which the conquered peoples behaved rather inertly in defending their rights.

It must also be said that looking through the prism of time at the formation of African countries in the future and taking into account the belonging of a certain colony to a certain metropolis, it is possible to observe how this affected the development of African countries in the future. For example, Egypt was controlled by England for a long time and now the country has a fairly strong economy and a good stable political situation, and on the contrary, Somalia, which was controlled by several countries, was never able to bring it to normal management both politically and economically; now we are witnessing a picture of constant wars for power in this country.

The colonial distribution of Africa had quite a strong influence on European countries on a global scale, which caused a race for the distribution of territories and became one of the causes of the First World War and then the Second World War in the future. The new colonies also gave a great impetus to new, more serious market relations, especially after the creation of the Suez Canal in 1869. Market relations led to the development of diplomatic relations, the creation of a scientific base in countries that had not known education before. The entire great colonial period made a huge contribution to the development of all the states that joined the process of dividing Africa.

In the last quarter of the 19th century 10 million square miles of the continent's territory were divided between the great Western European powers – Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Portugal. By 1914, 90% of the territory of Africa fell under their rule. This process in historiography is called “the division of Africa”. The history of the colonial division of Africa is an important part of the history of international relations in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. African problems directly influenced the development of Anglo-French, Franco-Italian and other relations in Europe, and the formation of the Entente alliance. The formation of military and political alliances at the end of the 19th century reflected the entire spectrum of international relations and international conflicts, including the African region, which played a special role.

**The conclusions.** During the research, it was found that Europeans had a number of reasons for colonizing Africa, which was based on certain ideological concepts. Prerequisites and reasons of colonial expansion were, as a rule, of a political, economic and cultural nature: the desire to capture and develop African territories, spread its ethno-religious, cultural and economic influence to remote areas, gain new markets, and seize raw materials and human resources. European foreign policy of the 19th century had a colonial orientation, at the center of which was the statement that Africans were inferior to them and would be very easy to conquer. This was actually the case, so the English, French, Italians, Germans, Belgians relatively easily managed to conquer a whole continent inhabited by a whole conglomerate of peoples. The prerequisites, reasons, nature of the colonial expansion of European states on the African continent differ, but the general statement is that natural and human resources, trade, new sales markets are the factors that attracted all the colonial metropolises that wanted to participate in the division of Africa.

<sup>20</sup>Фергюсон Н. Цивілізація. Як захід став успішним / Пер. з англ. В. Циба. Київ: Наш Формат, 2017. 488 с.

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