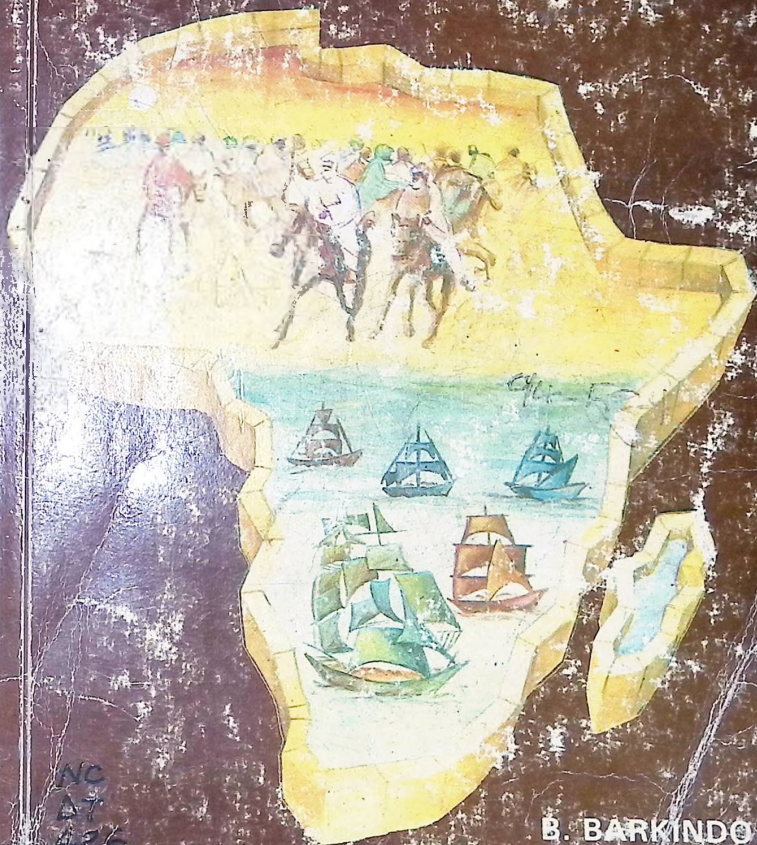


AFRICA

& THE WIDER WORLD 2

East, Central and Southern Africa since 1800



B. BARKINDO
M. OMOLEWA
E. N. MADUAKOR

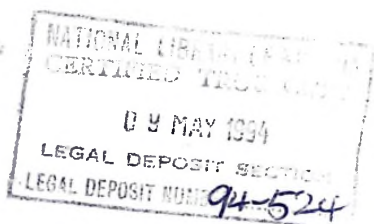
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AFRICA

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East, Central and Southern Africa since 1800

B Barkindo
M Omolewa
E N Maduakor



Longman Nigeria

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Ikeja, Agbor, Akure, Ibadan, Ilorin, Owerri, Zaria and
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First published 1992

National Library of Nigeria Cataloguing In Publication Data

BARKINDO, B.

Africa and the wider world 2: East, Central and
Southern Africa since 1800.

1. Africa, East – History.
 2. Africa, Central – History.
 3. Africa, Southern – History.
- I. Omolewa, M. II. Maduakor, E. N.

DT 426.B256

1992

967.6

ISBN 978-139-6741

AACR2

Printed by Meshico Enterprises Limited, Tel: 823098, Lagos.

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Preface

Africa and the Wider World (in three Volumes) is based on Nigeria's new Senior Secondary School and Teachers' College (TC II) curriculum for history. The new history curriculum focuses principally on Nigeria and Africa, as well as the relationship to Africa of the histories of such other regions of the world as Europe, America, the Middle East and Asia. As against the previous method of studying the histories of the individual regions of the world in isolation, the histories of other people are now studied with a view to understanding their effect on Nigeria and Africa.

Africa and the Wider World has, therefore, been written to guide the student's understanding of his environment and the influences that have shaped that environment. The demarcation of the three volumes of the series has been designed in such a way that the student progresses naturally in his history studies from the earlier times to the contemporary period. Volume 1 studies the student's own and neighbouring areas, on which he may already have had some information. Since this section forms the background to the study, not only has the curriculum been adequately covered, but an attempt has also been made by the authors to enrich this book by including some topics not necessarily specified in the curriculum. Studies on Asante and Dahomey, for instance, have been added in order to complete the picture of West African responses to the internal and external challenges of the nineteenth century.

It is expected that by the time the student is in the second year, he should be in a position to study the histories of other parts of the African continent. Volume 2 is thus an attempt to bring to the knowledge of the student the developments which were taking place in East and Southern Africa during the same periods as those that he studied in year one. He should, for example, be in a position to compare and contrast the history of Dahomey - which he will have studied earlier - with that of Buganda, or the history of Egypt with that of Zanzibar.

Volumes 1 and 2, therefore, take the student to the beginning of colonialism or the loss of independence in Africa to European imperialism. The third volume then takes the student through Africa's history from the inception of colonialism to contemporary times. Thus, a good knowledge of the *Great Trek* treated in the second year,

for instance, would be a great advantage in understanding *apartheid*, which is treated in Volume 3.

In summary, the three volumes are arranged thus: *West and Northern Africa since c.1800 to the inception of colonialism*; *East, Central and Southern Africa, c. 1800 to the inception of colonialism*; and *Modern Africa from the inception of colonialism to the present*.

The authors were active participants in the development of both the Senior Secondary School and the TC II curricula, under the auspices of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council. They have naturally drawn from this rich teaching and curriculum development experience in producing this series.

Although *Africa and the Wider World* is written with the needs of the Senior Secondary and Teachers' College student in mind, the volumes will be found useful by the University history undergraduate and other students who may require a quick, up to date revision material, and also by the general reader who may like factual, up to date information on African history.

It is our ardent hope that we have in this three-volume series translated the vision of all of us who converged in Lagos in January 1985, and Kano in August 1986 to develop the new curricula. We also believe that with the completion of this work, another giant stride has been taken towards the decolonisation of African history.

Bawuro Barkindo
Michael Omolewa
E N Maduakor

Chapter One

Zanzibar and the East African coastlands before the rise of the Omani empire

Introduction

In Book One, we studied how Muhammed Ali attempted to build an empire in Egypt. He started the modernisation of that country. He also established a ruling dynasty. Muhammed Ali, as we also noted, was not an Egyptian. He was not even an Arab. He was an Ottoman Turk, born in Albania. In chapters two and three of this Book, we shall see how Sayyid Said attempted to build the Omani empire with the capital at Zanzibar. Like Muhammed Ali, Sayyid Said was not an African. He was an Arab who was the Sultan of Oman, a country in the Arabian Peninsula. Oman was separated from Zanzibar by over 3200 kilometres of the waters of the Indian Ocean.

In this chapter, however, we shall briefly examine the geography and history of Zanzibar before the rise of the Omani empire. We shall begin by outlining the main geographical features of Zanzibar and the East African Coast. After this, we shall briefly examine the economy of the region before the arrival of the Portuguese. We shall then discuss the origins and development of contacts between Zanzibar and the East African Coast with the outside world before the arrival of the Portuguese. We shall also examine the impact of these contacts on the region. Finally we shall discuss the colonisation of the region by the Portuguese.

The main geographical features and peoples of Zanzibar and the East African coastlands

Zanzibar is a corruption of the Persian term *Zanjibar* (*Zanj* = 'black' and *bar* = 'coast') which means the 'land of the blacks'. We do not know when the island got this name, but Persians first came to Zanzibar in the sixth century A.D. The indigenes of Zanzibar call their

island Unguja. Today Zanzibar and its sister island of Pemba are parts of the Republic of Tanzania. In fact the name Tanzania was formed out of Tangayika, the name of the mainland state and Zanzibar, the island.

The island of Zanzibar is situated between latitudes 5° and 6° south. It is the largest and most important island lying off the East African Coast. It is separated from the African mainland by a channel 40 to 48 kilometres wide. The island is irregular in shape. It is about 43 kilometres wide and 80 kilometres long. Its total area is estimated at 400,000 acres.

Zanzibar has two rainy seasons in the year. The first known as the 'great rains' or *mazika* comes in April and May. The second, known as the 'lesser rains' or *muli* lasts from October to November or December. Despite the heavy rains, many areas of Zanzibar are today barren. This, however, has not been always so. When the Portuguese arrived on the island in the beginning of the sixteenth century, it was very fertile.

Pemba, the sister island of Zanzibar, is separated from the latter, and from the East African Coast by a deep sea-channel. It is about 67.2 kilometres long and about 250,000 acres. This means it is smaller than Zanzibar. The soil in Pemba was more fertile and the rainfall higher than in Zanzibar and the coastal areas of the African mainland. Pemba was the richest agricultural area in the whole region. The Arabs nicknamed the island *al-kudra* meaning 'the green land'.

The Wasawahili used to produce a large amount of cereals. These include barley, oats, maize, millet and sesame. Cassava or *Muhugo* was the staple food on the island. Rice was produced in large quantities in Pemba. A large amount of it was exported to the coastlands especially Mombasa. There were a great variety of fruits like mangoes, oranges, plantain, pineapple, grapes, berries, paw-paw, lemon and citron. Almost all vegetables loved by Europeans were produced on the islands. These included carrots, cucumber, potatoes, cabbage, beans and cauliflower. The people also grew African spices like 'chilli' and red pepper.

Over the years much of the land became barren. This was partly caused by the overuse of the land by farmers. It was also caused by the reckless cutting down of trees. Finally, the production of cloves after the emergence of the Omani empire led the farmer to grow less foodstuff. This shall be examined in the next chapter.

The coastal area of the African mainland is situated in a narrow plain varying from 16 to 64 kilometres in width. There are patches of mangrove swamps particularly at the mouth of the rivers. The weather is generally hot and humid. Behind this narrow coast lies a wide

region which is semi-arid. The Swahili called it *Nyika* which means 'wilderness'. The *Nyika* prevented closer interaction between the people on the coast and those of the interior. It was only in the second half of the eighteenth century that closer relations between the two areas was established.

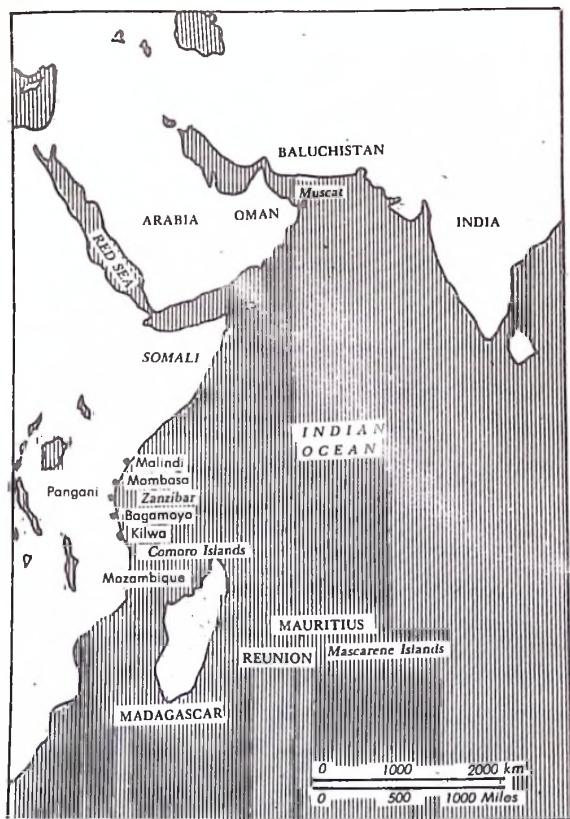
The earlier settlers of Zanzibar, Pemba and the East African coast are said to have been Bantus. In Zanzibar and Pemba, the earlier settlers were called Wa-Tambutu and Wa-Hadimu. They were said to have migrated there from the mainland in about the third or fourth Century A.D.

However, the earlier peoples in the region have largely disappeared. They had inter-married with later comers to produce other peoples especially the Wasawahili. We shall further examine the latter below.

The economy of Zanzibar and the East African Coast before the arrival of the Portuguese

The people of Zanzibar and its sister island of Pemba were predominantly farmers. We have already outlined their products while outlining the geography. In fact, as we noted, it was the rice and other foodstuff produced in Pemba that the people of Mombasa depended upon. The people of Zanzibar and Pemba were also great fishermen. They hunted big sea animals like the shark whose meat they cherished. They kept a number of domestic animals like sheep and goats. There used to be cattle and a number of wild animals on the islands. These, however, had largely disappeared by the time the Portuguese arrived there.

The people of Zanzibar and the East African Coast were also great traders. They traded among themselves. We have seen that rice from Pemba was sold to the people of Mombasa. Sheep were sold by the Somali and the Galla to the Zanzibaris. Geese and ducks were brought by those from Madagascar while turkeys were bought from traders from Mozambique. The Zanzibaris also traded with the outside world. They obtained ivory and rhinoceros horns from the people of the interior and sold them to the foreign traders. How these were organised in the earlier period we still do not know. This is because it was only from the second half of the eighteenth century that regular trade was established between the coastal peoples and those of the interior. We, however, know about the gold of the ancient Zimbabwe Kingdom which came to the coastal town of Sofala for export.



The Indian Ocean in the nineteenth century

Origins and development of contacts between Zanzibar and the East African Coast with the outside world before the arrival of the Portuguese

The South Arabians, Persians, Greeks, Phoenicians, Assyrians and Indians had been trading with Zanzibar and the East African Coast for centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese in the area. It was reported that between 247 and 221 B.C. Greek sailors looking for ivory to buy visited the region. The South Arabians were said to have been visiting the region much earlier than the Greeks.

It was the South Arabians who first discovered that sailing to and from the region could be done more easily when one follows the changes in the climate. From December to February, the monsoon trade winds blow northeastwards. This means the winds blow towards the region. From May to August, the monsoon trade winds change course and blow in the opposite direction i.e. south-westwards. In those days there were no engines in ships. They used sails which needed favourable winds to make them move. The ships sailed faster whenever they were moving in the direction that the winds blew. Thus from December to February, sailors in the ships called dhows visited Zanzibar and the East African Coast. They spent the two months or so transacting their businesses. From May when the winds changed course, they began to return home. The Arabs kept the knowledge of the changes of the monsoons secret. They, therefore, monopolised the trade with the East African coastlands for centuries. It was only during the first century A.D. that others like the Greek found out about the monsoon winds.

The impact of contacts between Zanzibar and the East African Coast and the outside world before the arrival of the Portuguese

The centuries of regular contacts between the East African Coast and its islands and the peoples of the Middle East and Asia led to so many developments. The first was the establishment of regular trade. The second was the birth of the Swahili civilisation. Let us examine these in a greater detail.

Establishment of regular trade

The first impact of the contacts was the establishment of regular trade. By A.D. 60, for example, Zanzibar was said to have been under the economic influence of the Hymyarite Kingdom. This kingdom was located in present-day Saudi Arabia. Businessmen from the coastal town of Mocha used to send many ships to the islands. Arab traders took various items to Zanzibar. These included spearheads, hatchets, awls and various kinds of glass. From Zanzibar and its neighbours, they bought ivory, rhinoceros horns, tortoise shells, hides and skin, gold, African spices, millet and coconut oil. As we shall examine in the next chapter, the pre-Islamic Arabians were also trading actively with the peoples of Ethiopia. By the close of the first century A.D., the Persians and Indians had also become active traders with Zanzibar. At that time the Hymyarite Kingdom had already collapsed and the Omanis had become one of the most active Arab traders in the area. We shall discuss the Omani Kingdom in the next chapter.

With the rise of Islam in 622, more Arabs and Persians as well as Indians went to Zanzibar and the East African Coastlands. Many continued to trade and go back to their homes as their predecessors had been doing for centuries. Others, however, settled permanently in the area. The volume of trade goods also increased. More garments in silk and cotton were brought. Silk was obtained from China. Other goods from China included porcelain and rhubarb (herbs used as medicine). From India came cotton clothes, jewellery and spices. And from Zanzibar and the East African Coast, slaves, in addition to the goods already listed were obtained.

The Swahili civilisation

The second impact of the contacts between Zanzibar and the East African Coast with the Middle East was the birth of the Swahili civilisation. Today, the dominant population on the East African Coast and the neighbouring island is the Wasawahili. The term was derived from the Arabic word *Sawahil* which means 'coast'. Wasawahili, therefore, means 'people of the coast'. On the East African Coast the Wasawahili are located between River Juba in the north and River Ruvuma in the south. They have, as their neighbours, the Somali in the north and the Makuwa peoples in the present-day Republic of Mozambique in the south. The populations of Zanzibar, Pemba and the other neighbouring islands are also predominantly Wasawahili.

The Wasawahili were the descendants of the inter-marriages between the Bantus and later immigrants. The latter were Arabs and Persians who had started settling in the region by the sixth century A.D. The number of those who settled there increased after the emergence of Islam in the seventh century. These waves of Muslims also swarmed Christian Ethiopia in the same period as we shall examine in another chapter.

In the East African region, two types of Wasawahili emerged out of the inter-marriages. These were the Shirazi who were a minority nobility and the larger Wasawahili commoners. In 1857 there were only about 100 families of the Shirazi in Zanzibar. Today they have virtually disappeared. The Wasawahili, however, are still the dominant ethnic group in the region. It should also be pointed out that more Wasawahili emerged in the succeeding years. This was through further migrations of Arabs and Asians as well as Indians in the region. More and more slaves were also brought from the African interior. Out of these, many became concubines to the Arab, Persian and other settled immigrants. Their children grew up as Wasawahili. For example all the children of Sayyid Said who succeeded him as Sultans in Zanzibar had African mothers.

The Wasawahili are predominantly Muslim Sunni. They speak a language called *kiswahili*. It is basically a Bantu language but with a heavy borrowing from Arabic. Kiswahili is today widely spoken in eastern and central Africa. It is the official language in the Republic of Tanzania.

The Wasawahili had succeeded in establishing an advanced Swahili civilisation which flourished in the area for centuries. This civilisation which was basically Islamic, was a mixture of an African culture with those of the Arabs and Persians. By the late fifteenth century, members of the ruling groups and businessmen were living in beautiful houses built of stones. Most cities had domed mosques. The houses and mosques had several large windows and terraces, and were surrounded by beautiful gardens. The cities also had well laid streets. When the Portuguese arrived at the end of the fifteenth century, they were greatly surprised at the Swahili civilisation. The Portuguese were received by the Sultans of Mozambique and Malindi who were clad in beautifully embroidered clothes of silk, velvet, damask and satin. The Sultans sat on arm-chairs, carried rich daggers and swords sheathed in silver scabbards and were attended by numerous richly dressed Swahili officials and servants. The Wasawahili women were dressed in rich clothes and adorned with gold, silver and pearls. The Portuguese confessed that the Swahili civilisation compared favourably with what obtained in Europe at the time.

Swahili city-state

The Wasawahili succeeded in establishing several city-states on the East African Coast and its neighbouring islands. About 37 city-states were established in the region. The most important included Kilwa, Malindi, Kilifi, Mombasa and Sofala on the coastlands. There were also the island-cities of Zanzibar, Pemba, Pate, Lamu and several others. Each of the city-states was independent of the others. It had its own Sultan, government and its own army. Some of the city-states like Zanzibar, Kilwa and Mafiyah were already minting their own coins by the time the Portuguese arrived there.

The ruling dynasties of those city-states were said to be originally Persians who came from Shiraz, a place in modern Iran. They were said to have arrived in the area in the sixth century A.D. or even earlier. This means they were there before the emergence of Islam. As we have shown above, the Persians and the Arabs first came as traders and later settled there. By the tenth century the Persians had established ruling Sultans in the whole region.

Also by the tenth century, the Shiraz had established a sultanate in Kilwa. The first ruler of Kilwa was said to have been called Ali. He was, however, nicknamed *Nguo-Mingi* which means 'much calico'. The sultanate of Kilwa was the most influential city-state in the region up to the coming of the Portuguese. It was a son of Ali, Sultan of Kilwa, who later went to Mombasa where he established a ruling dynasty.

In Zanzibar, there were series of Persian and Arab settlements. In 684 B.C., two Arab brothers from Oman were said to have travelled to the East African coastal region where they settled with their followers. They were later joined in about A.D. 1000 by a large group of Persians from Shiraz. They established a sultanate at Tumbatu, an islet in the northern part of Zanzibar island. Here the Persian civilisation flourished.

By the fifteenth century, the Arabs and the Persians had intermarried extensively with the indigenous peoples. The Swahili peoples and civilisation had already emerged, as we have already seen. At that time the capital of the sultanate was at Unguja Mkuu or 'Old Zanzibar'.

The Sultan of Zanzibar at this time was titled *Mwenyi Mkuu* or 'The Great Lord'. He was greatly respected by his people. All his subjects approached him on their knees with their heads uncovered. His will was law. He held absolute power of life and death over his Wasawahili followers. His insignia of office consisted of carved drums and horns. These were considered sacred. The horn was only sounded when something of great importance was to happen. The Wasawahili

believed that the Mwenyi Mkuu controlled natural elements. He could withhold rain, cause drought or disease. The Portuguese allowed the Mwenyi Nkuus to continue to rule their subjects. They also ruled side by side with the Omani Sultan during the rule of Sayyid Said.

The last Mwenyi Mkuu to have had power and influence was Ahmed b. Mohamed b. Hasan al Alawi. He built his palace at Dunga in 1845. Dunga was a place about 17 kilometres from Zanzibar city. He lived to a great old age and died in 1865. He was about 80 years old. His people greatly feared and respected him. After his death nobody lived in his palace. The Wasawahili believed it was haunted.

The colonisation of Zanzibar and the East African Coast by the Portuguese

The Portuguese came upon Zanzibar and the East African coastlands by accident. It was while they were trying to find the way to the Indies that they came upon Zanzibar and the East African coastlands. We need to examine the reasons for this journey.

The causes of the first European journeys of discovery

The European nations during the period became alarmed at the expansion of Islam. In 1453, the Ottoman Turks had entered Constantinople. This was the capital of Eastern Christian empire. From there the Muslims looked as if they would conquer the whole of Europe. In 1517, the Ottomans, as we saw in Book One, occupied Syria, Egypt and Arabia. Their ships dominated the Mediterranean Sea. Further eastwards, the empire of the Great Mogul arose in India. In 1502, Persia became an independent Muslim Kingdom. The Europeans were determined to find a way of stopping the Muslim expansion. They hoped to discover an ally or allies with whom to fight the Muslims on several fronts. This ally was said to have been located in Eastern Africa. He was called 'Prester John'. We shall say more on this when we come to study the history of Ethiopia.

Secondly, Europeans had been in great need of the luxuries of the East. These included silk, spices and other goods. These goods were got through South Arabians, Indians, Greeks and lately Turks who acted as middle-men. The Europeans wanted to by-pass these middle-men and trade with the producers themselves.

Thirdly, there were rich rulers who were interested in the discovery of these sea-routes. Portugal and Spain were the leading sea-

farung nations of the world at that time. They rivalled each other in trying to find out the easy routes to the East. Prince Henry, a second son of the King of Portugal encouraged sailors from his country to go on journeys of discovery.

In July 1497, Vasco da Gama left Portugal on one of these journeys. He was accompanied by about 170 men in four ships. They rounded the Cape of Good Hope on their way to India. In March 1498, the Portuguese visited Mozambique and Mombasa city-states as we have already noted. On his return journey, Vasco da Gama visited Malindi where he obtained refreshments for his crew. Vasco da Gama, it will be noted did not visit Zanzibar and Pemba.

The Portuguese conquest and colonisation of Zanzibar and the East African Coast

Zanzibar was captured by the Portuguese in 1503. It was conquered by Lourenco Ravasco, a commander of one of the Portuguese ships. He first engaged himself with the capture of trade ships laden with trade goods. He did this for two months and captured about 20 ships laden with honey, rice, cotton stuff, silk, ivory, tortoise shells and wax. One night, Ravasco dropped anchor at the coast of Zanzibar. The following morning, he used his ship's cannon to shell the city. He was said to have killed about 34 people. This forced the Sultan to capitulate. He was forced to pay an annual tribute of 100 mithqals of gold to Don Manuel, King of Portugal. The Portuguese went on to conquer all the Swahili city-states from Sofala to Mogadishu. The Sultan of Malindi, for example, was forced to pay a tribute of 1500 ingots of gold every year. Kilwa's annual tribute was 2000 mithqals.

In 1508, Duarte de Lemos attacked Mafiyah, Zanzibar and Pemba for failing to pay the annual tribute. The Sultan and people of Mafiyah submitted. Those of Pemba fled to Mombasa while Zanzibar resisted. Both had their properties plundered. In 1528-9, Nuno da Cuiha, the Portuguese Viceroy of India attacked Mombasa. The Sultan of Zanzibar by that time had become friendly with the Portuguese. He supplied da Cuiha with provisions.

The Portuguese reduced the whole region to a single province. It had a governor who was answerable to the Viceroy of India. His seat was the first located at Kilwa. It was later moved to Sofala and finally to Malindi.

The Portuguese built churches and a forte. They also built some mansions in the areas they occupied.

Zanzibar and the East African Coast stayed in this state until the

area was wrested from the Portuguese by the Omani rulers. During their occupation of the region, the Swahili civilisation was destroyed. However, the economic and cultural relations between the area and the Middle East did not cease. We shall examine this in the next chapter.

Questions

1. Zanzibar is
 - A. a Swahili term which means island
 - B. a Persian term which means land of the blacks
 - C. an Arabic term which means an island citystate
 - D. a Portuguese term which means a fort
 - E. an indigenous name for Zanzibar island
2. Oman was separated from Zanzibar by
 - A. over 3200 kilometres across the lands of East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.
 - B. over 5600 kilometres across the Red Sea
 - C. over 3200 kilometres across the Indian Ocean
 - D. over 3200 kilometres across the Ogaden and Arabian desert
 - E. over 8000 kilometres across the Indian Ocean
3. Nyika is
 - A. a Swahili term which means wilderness
 - B. a man who is wild-looking
 - C. the hunting groups that lived in the interior of East Africa
 - D. a Swahili long-distance trader
 - E. the farming groups on the East African coastlands
4. The following were the first to settle on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba:
 - A. the Persians
 - B. the Portuguese
 - C. the Arabs
 - D. the Bantu
 - E. the Swahili
5. Write short notes on three of the following:
 - i). dhow

- ii). Nguo-Mingi
- iii). Mwenyi-Mkuu Ahmed b. Mohammed b. Hassan Al-Alawi
- iv). Nuno da Cuuha
- v). Lourenco Ravesco

6. Outline the economy of Zanzibar and the East African coastlands before the arrival of the Portuguese.
7. Describe the seasonal changes of the monsoon winds and how they helped trading activities between Zanzibar and those countries across the Indian Ocean.
8. Discuss the Swahili civilisation before the arrival of the Portuguese.
9. Examine the nature and organisation of the Swahili city-states before the arrival of the Portuguese.
10. What motivated the first European journeys of discovery?
11. Outline the conquest and colonisation of Zanzibar and the East African Coast by the Portuguese.

Further reading

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Chapter Two

Sayyid Said and the rise of the Omani empire

Introduction

In this chapter, we shall discuss the emergence of the Omani empire under the rule of Sayyid Said. We shall first outline developments in the Omani sultanate up to the emergence of Sayyid Said. We shall then discuss the conquest of Zanzibar and the East African Coast by Sayyid Said. We shall also examine the factors that led Sayyid Said to transfer his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar. The political and economic structures of the Omani empire will also be outlined. Finally, we shall discuss the economic and political relations between Zanzibar and the East African Coast and its interior.

Developments in Oman before the ascension of Sayyid Said to power

* Oman was a small Arab country situated in the southeastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Its chief town was called Muscat and its chief port was called Ormuz. Although a poor country, Oman was located along the ancient trade routes of the world. This encouraged the Omani Arabs to become famous sailors and long distance traders. They visited many countries around the Indian Ocean. These included Madagascar and the areas along the East African Coast and its islands.

The Omani Arabs were Muslims of the Kharijite Ibadi sect. The doctrine of this sect rejects hereditary succession. The Ibadites believe that any man can become the leader who was called *Imam*. The latter is more of a religious title than say Sultan or Sayyid which are temporal titles. The Omanis were ruled by Imams since A.D. 751. In the course of time, however, several competing ruling dynasties of Imams arose.

Many times in the course of their history, the Omanis were engaged in petty quarrels and civil wars. However, the Omani Arabs always came together whenever they were faced by a common

enemy. In addition, the Omanis were almost always blessed with good leaders whenever they were faced with national crisis. Thus when in A.D. 1511 the Portuguese occupied chief Omani towns, the Omanis considered it a national crisis. The domination of the country by an alien race of Christians was found unacceptable to them. They therefore, came together under the able leadership of Imam Sultan b. Saif to confront the Portuguese. By 1650 they were able to drive away the Portuguese.

The victory of Oman over the Portuguese marked an important epoch in the histories of Oman and Zanzibar. The Omanis were looked upon as deliverers by many of those who were equally dominated by the Portuguese. In 1660 the people of Mombasa on the East African Coast invited the Omani to rid them of the Portuguese rule. Imam Sultan b. Saif accepted the invitation. He led his navy which captured Mombasa after a long siege. This singular victory marked the beginning of the end of Portuguese rule in most of the East African Coast. By 1698 the Omanis had finally driven the Portuguese from Mombasa. They also occupied the port of Kilwa and the Island of Pemba. *Walis* or governors were appointed in all the areas occupied by the Omanis.

Imam Sultan b. Saif died in 1668. He was succeeded by his equally energetic son, Saif b. Sultan (1668-1711). It was the latter who modernised Oman. He built a strong navy composed of 28 ships of various sizes. His largest ship carried 28 guns. Imam Sultan also improved the economy of the country. He ordered the planting of thousands of coconut and date palm trees in the whole country. However, after the death of the Imam in 1711 there followed civil wars which shook Oman to its very foundations. The country eventually became very weak. This gave the Persians the chance to occupy Oman.

Ahmed b. Said (1741-1773) and the founding of the Busaidi ruling dynasty

The domination of the country by the Persians brought out the nationalist instinct in the Omanis. It also led to the emergence of another remarkable leader named Ahmed b. Said. The latter was not a member of any of the families that usually produced the Imam. He was first appointed a governor of Sohar Province. It was there that he showed his courage and remarkable leadership qualities. He soon drove away the Persians from Sohar Province.

The Omanis were deeply impressed with the qualities and activities of Ahmed b. Said. In 1741, he was made the Imam of Oman. He eventually succeeded in driving the Persians from the rest of the

Omani state. He even pursued them to Basra where he almost annihilated them. Basra at that time was part of the Ottoman empire. Because of this singular act, the Ottoman Sultan sent Imam Ahmed a very rich present. Thereafter the Ottoman Sultans sent presents to the Omani rulers every year until the nineteenth century. Later on Imam Ahmed exterminated the pirates who used to rob sailors between India and Oman. This noble deed pleased the Muslim Emperor of Moghul in India. He entered into a treaty of friendship with Imam Ahmed.

Imam Ahmed introduced further reforms in Oman. More relevant to us, however, is the fact that Ahmed was the founder of the Busaidi dynasty. This was the dynasty of Sultans who ruled the Omani empire. Ahmed was also the first to assume the title *Sayyid* which was later adopted as the title of the ruling persons in the dynasty. The term Sayyid, in Oman and among the eastern Arabs, means a chief. This means it was more of a temporal title than say Imam which was religious as we have already noted. Ahmed b. Said died in 1775 leaving seven sons and three daughters.

Omani relations with the East African Coast and its islands before the rise of Sayyid Said to power

The civil wars after the death of Imam Saif b. Sultan in 1711 led to the weakening of Oman as we have already noted. This in turn led to the weakening of the Omani hold on the East African Coast and its islands. The Omani state, no doubt, revived with the rule of Ahmed b. Said. However as we have already noted, the latter's attention was centred more in Oman and neighbouring areas than with the distant East African Coast and its islands.

Most of the Arab governors, except those of Zanzibar and Kilwa revolted against the Omani rule. The first to declare his independence was Muhammad b. Uthman the governor of Mombasa. At that time, Mombasa, dominated by the Mazrui Arabs, was the leading state in the region. The Mazrui Arabs then embarked on a policy of establishing their control over the whole region. They seized the opportunity of a political crisis in Pemba to dispatch an expedition to the Island. The governor and his principal followers were expelled. In his place, Khamis b. Ali, a Mazrui, was appointed governor.

In 1753, Mombasa sent a force to capture Zanzibar. It, however, failed to take the town. It was an earlier precaution taken by the Oman ruler which saved Zanzibar. This was because in 1746, Imam Ahmad b. Said had sent a garrison of soldiers to protect Zanzibar against its enemies. The garrison was put under the command of Abdullahi b.

Djad, the Busaidi governor of the island. Thus when the Mombasa forces invaded the island, they found it strongly defended. They were forced to withdraw.

In 1784, an expedition was sent to the East African Coast by Sayyid. Said b. Ahmed (1784-1802). It was able to reassert the Omani influence in the region for a short time. This was more especially in the case with Zanzibar which renewed its allegiance to Omani. However, due to other pressing problems the strong Omani influence was never sustained. By the time Said came to power only Zanzibar had remained nominally under the Omani control.

The ascension of Sayyid Said to power and his attempt to establish the Omani empire

Sayyid Said was born in 1791. He was the son of Sayyid Sultan b. Ahmed (1802-1804). He was only 13 years old when his father was killed in 1804. He was immediately elected Sultan. His cousin Sayyid Bedr was appointed regent until Said should come of age. The real power was, however, in the hands of Said's aunt Bibi Mauza. She was a very powerful and crafty lady who was popularly referred to as *Bint el-Imam* ('daughter of the Imam', i.e. Princess Royal). She was said to have been responsible for the murder of Sayyid Bedr in 1807. This allowed Said to immediately take over personal power in Oman.

Revival of Omani influence on the East African Coast and its islands

Once he came to power Sayyid Said was determined to revive the Omani influence in the region of the East African Coast. To achieve this, he saw that the Mazrui influence would have to be eliminated. He first of all used 'divide and rule' tactics to achieve his aims. He turned the petty quarrels in the region to his advantage. During a conflict between the islands of Pate and Lamu, the Mazrui of Mombasa supported Pate. A joint Pate-Mazrui force attacked Lamu in 1813. They were thoroughly beaten by the forces of Lamu. Fearing further attacks from their enemies, the governor of Lamu sought Said's protection. Said accepted the request and immediately sent a garrison to Lamu. The Omani army was not only asked to defend Lamu but also directed to prevent further extension of Mazrui influence in the region. By 1822 Said was able to install a man loyal to him as the governor of Lamu.

Said gained control over the islands of Pate and Pemba almost at the same time as he got Lamu. In 1819, there was a succession dispute in Pate. The Mazrui supported one Bwana Kombo who became the Sultan. The defeated candidate went to Oman to appeal to Said. In 1822 Sayyid Said dispatched a fleet commanded by Hamid b. Ahmed to East Africa. After a fierce engagement the Mazrui forces were defeated and the Omani took control of Pate. As soon as he heard the arrival of the Omani fleet in Pate, the Omani governor of Zanzibar invaded Pemba which he eventually captured in 1823.

The Mazrui found themselves in a difficult position. Lamu, Pemba and Pate, which were their major possessions of the East African Coast were captured by the Omani. The loss of Pemba was even more painful. This was because Pemba was the source of Mombasa's food supply. In addition, during their engagements with the Omani, the Mazrui lost their fleet. These were captured by the Omani during the engagements over Pemba. To make matters worse, there were definite signs that Sayyid Said was about to attack Mombasa itself. All these reasons led the Mazrui Arabs of Mombasa to seek British protection in 1824. This was accepted by the British. However, in 1826, only two years later, the British protection over Mombasa was terminated. The British decided that working with Said would be more beneficial in promoting their economic interests than with the Mazrui Arabs. On their part the latter did not like the British interference into their local affairs.

The conquest of Mombasa and the transfer of Said's capital to Zanzibar

The withdrawal of British protectorate over Mombasa gave Said the opportunity he had longed for. Late in 1826, he asked the Mazrui governor to surrender Fort Jesus to him. The latter was the seat of the ruling group in Mombasa. It was heavily fortified. The request by Said was, of course, rejected. Thereupon, Said sent a strong navy which arrived in Mombasa in January 1828. After a fierce battle, the Mazrui were defeated and Fort Jesus was surrendered to Said's forces. However, the struggle for the control of Mombasa went on until 1837 when the Mazrui finally surrendered to Said. The majority of the Mazrui Arabs fled to the mainland. Their leaders were arrested and eventually killed. Thus ended the history of the Mazrui rulers of Mombasa. They had ruled Mombasa Island from 1739 to 1837, almost one hundred years. On the other hand, the capitulation of Mombasa meant that Said was the dominant authority in the whole region.

In 1840 Said moved his capital from Muscat in Arabia to Zanzibar.

Already in 1832, long before Mombasa fell to him, Said had decided to transfer his capital to Zanzibar. It was an important decision which affected the history of the Busaidi Omani ruling dynasty. It also affected the history of the East African Coast and its islands. There were several reasons that led Said to transfer his capital to Zanzibar.

Geographically, Zanzibar had many advantages. It had deep natural harbours. This meant that very large ships can find anchorage there. Ships passing by the island found that it had the best water supply in the whole area between Alexandria and the Cape of Good Hope. In addition, Zanzibar was a major meeting point of ships from various parts of the world.

The location of Zanzibar to the East African Coast was also advantageous. It was only some 40 kilometres from the mainland. Its harbours were on the west or sheltered side of the island. This means it was quite safe and secure from attack.

Economically, Zanzibar was strategically located. It was a distributing centre for trade for the whole of East Africa. In addition, we have also noted that Zanzibar and its sister island of Pemba had very fertile soils. Already several agricultural crops were produced.

The above were some of the reasons that led Sayyid Said to transfer his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar. However, we should realise that when he decided to transfer himself to Zanzibar, its advantages were not obvious. It was still an islet covered mostly by jungle. For centuries, no one took it to be that important. This shows the remarkable foresight of Sayyid Said. Nothing would have stopped him from choosing Mombasa or Kilwa or Lamu or Mogadishu. All these were international ports which were well-known for centuries. He, however, decided to choose the relatively unknown Zanzibar. He was eventually proved right in his decision. Said was accompanied to Zanzibar by hundreds of Omani Arabs. They were to play dominant political, economic and cultural roles in the Omani empire. There were also Indians and several other peoples from Asia and the Middle East who either accompanied or later followed the Sultan to Zanzibar.

The organisation of the Omani empire

Although Said transferred his capital to Zanzibar, he did not abandon the Sultanate of Oman in Arabia. He frequently travelled between one Sultanate to the other. Whenever he was in one Sultanate, his appointed Wali or governor in the other carried on the administration in his absence. It was a very difficult arrangement. This was because the two Sultanates were separated from each other by a journey of over 3200 kilometres across the Indian Ocean. The only means of

communication was by ships which was very slow. In addition, there were nearly always crisis in one Sultanate when Said was in the other. For example, Said was only 3 months in Zanzibar, after his final move, when there was a revolt in Oman. He had to abandon everything and dash to Oman to put everything in order. However, Said resolutely continued to hold tightly to his dual Sultanates until he died.

Extent of the Omani empire

At the time of his death, Said controlled almost all the East African coastal areas from Mozambique to Cape Guardafui. This cut across the coastal areas now located in the Republics of Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia. All the neighbouring islands such as Zanzibar, Pemba, Pate, Lamu and several smaller others were also under his control. In the interior of the African mainland, there were several Arab settlements which recognised the Omani over-rule. For example, the Arab and Swahili traders from Zanzibar established a petty Sultanate at Khota-Khota located on the western shores of Lake Malawi. In the Arabian Peninsula, the Sultanate of Oman and its islands were effectively under Said's control. He also had control of Hormuz and other islands in the Persian Gulf.

Political organisation

Said built his main palace at Zanzibar city. He called it *bait el-Sahil* (House on the Coast). Most of those who helped him in running the government also built their houses there. It was also here that leading Arab, Indian and European merchants settled. Thus very soon Zanzibar city became the dominant city in East Africa. Said also built a smaller palace at Mtoni some few kilometres inland from Zanzibar city. It was there that he often retreated to rest.

Said ran a theocratic government. In Book One, we studied the theocratic government established by Seku Ahmadu in Masina. A theocratic government, we noted, was based on religious doctrines. The government of Said was based on the *Kharijite Ibadi* sect. However, Said's government adopted a toleration towards the Sunni Muslims. His main title was Sayyid which was a modification between the strictly Islamic title of Imam and the more secular one of Sultan. However, Said was addressed with all the three terms. This shows there was some modification in the strict Ibadi doctrines of the earlier period in Omani.

Everything in the empire received the personal attention of the

Imam-Sultan. These included serious issues like going to war and those like giving food and shelter to a needy subject. The most influential people in the government were the *Ulama* or scholars. There were twelve leading *Mutawahs* or scholars of blameless life, who were always with the ruler. They advised him on the Islamic (Ibadi) way of running a government. Sunni or orthodox scholars were also consulted on matters of law. There were several officials who ran different aspects of the government as ministers, army or navy generals, etc. The most influential public officials in Said's government were the Secretary of State, Ahmad b. Aman Albasrawi and two leading *Qadis* (or judges) who are mentioned below.

Said was a man of simple tastes. He adopted only things which did not compromise his religious beliefs. He was opposed to all innovations which had no religious support. He was also against ostentatious living. For example, in 1842, Queen Victoria sent him a state carriage as a gift. In those days, carriages pulled by horses were the most efficient means of travelling on land. There were no motor cars. For over one year, the gift was not opened. He eventually sent it as a gift to another ruler in India. Later on, he received a splendid silver-gilted tea set from London. He returned it to the British consul in Zanzibar. Finally, Said refused to have his picture painted or his photograph taken. He did not take intoxicants and his Ibadi doctrine forbade the taking or smoking of tobacco. When he died, his successor wanted to bury him in a splendid mausoleum. The Ibadi *Ulama* gave a *fatwa* that it was impious to cover a grave with a roof. The project was abandoned half-way.

The judiciary

All cases of crime and dispute were decided by the *Qadis*. The leading *Qadis* in Said's period of rule were Sheikh Muhiyy el Din, a leading Sunni scholar from Lamu and Sheikh Muhammad, an influential Ibadi scholar. This again demonstrates toleration. But there was a right of appeal to the Sultan's court. In addition, no one except the Sultan had the right to order capital punishment. This was only carried out according to the dictates of the Quran. Richard Burton who visited Zanzibar one year after the death of Sayyid Said said offenders were never tortured during the rule of Said. There was also only one case of mutilation throughout the great ruler's reign. Offenders were usually fined, put into prison or whipped.

The military

Said's military strength depended on his navy. This we saw was the tradition of his predecessors. Since his possessions were largely

maritime territories, the ships and gun-boats were the backbone of the armed forces. The ships were also used in communication with Oman, India, Europe and America. In addition to the navy, however, Said had a standing army consisting mainly of Baluchi men and officers. Others in the army were Persians and Indians. Members of the army were settled in garrisons at places like Zanzibar, Mombasa, Lamu, Pate, Kilwa, Pangana and others. There were small garrisons also in all the strategic locations on the long distance trade routes.

Government revenue

The customs collector was also the chief treasurer. Whenever Said wanted goods or cash, he sent a written letter to him. The balancing of accounts was done every three or four years. We shall say more about the customs collectors later on. But receiving of customs was Said's principal source of revenue. Another main source of revenue was the annual poll-tax paid by the Sultan's subjects. It was from the collected revenue that Said settled the navy, army, civil service and personal expenses. A substantial amount was also sent to Muscat as subsidy.

Each province or state was ruled by a Wali or governor appointed by Said. Most often the Wali ruled side by side with the traditional rulers of the area. The Wali largely saw to the success of the Omani trade. He normally had a garrison under him as we have already noted. The traditional or native ruler, on the other hand, largely administered his people. He collected tributes, some of which he remitted to Zanzibar. Most areas under Omani rule were independent in running their internal affairs. Some of these provinces or city states included Zanzibar itself, Pemba and coastal city states like Lamu, Pate, Mombasa, Pangani, Babamoyo, Kilwa and Malindi.

Other states or communities sought Said's protection. For example in 1842, several *Sheikhs* in Somaliland asked for Said's protection. Said agreed and sent a Wali and a garrison there. In 1853, Sayyid Said and King Kimweri the Great of the Vuga Kingdom agreed to end their territorial dispute. Vuga was a Bantu Kingdom situated along the coastal area of modern Tanzania. In the agreement, Said was allowed to administer the important coastal towns of Tanga and Pangani. These towns had a large number of Arab and Swahili population. They were thus important centres of Omani long-distance trade. King Kimweri on the other hand was allowed to control the rest of the coast. He was to appoint the *Jumbe* or headmen there. However, all the *Jumbe* had to be confirmed by Said.

Said and the emergence of Zanzibar as the economic nerve centre of East Africa

Zanzibar soon came to control the external economy of East Africa. Indian, American, European, Persian and Arab traders operated from there. In fact even before Said settled there permanently, the Omani governor of Zanzibar had banned all foreigners from going into the interior. They were decreed to operate only from Zanzibar where the Arabs and the Swahili traders operated as middlemen. On the other hand, there were efforts by the several peoples in the interior to have access to Zanzibar or the coastal towns under her control. They wanted to obtain the European goods especially guns and gunpowder. This we should note was the same development taking place in Asante and Dahomey which we studied in Book One. In Chapters 4 and 5 of this book, we shall see the desperate efforts of the Kabaka of Buganda to secure direct links with Said and his successors. Let us examine Said's efforts in turning Zanzibar into the principal emporium of East Africa.

One of the most revolutionary economic changes which Said introduced in Zanzibar was the production of cloves. Oil was extracted from the flour of the clove tree. The oil was not only used in cooking but also in preparing several medicines. There was no single clove tree on Zanzibar and Pemba islands before the coming of Said. He first obtained the seeds from the island of Mauritius in 1828. He then planted the seeds in his palace to see if cloves could grow in the area. When he was satisfied that cloves could grow well in the area, he ordered that the seeds be distributed throughout Zanzibar and Pemba. Before the introduction of cloves, the main export product of Zanzibar was coconut while that of Pemba was rice.

Said directed that every planter should grow 3 clove trees for every coconut tree he planted. If he did not follow these instructions the planter may have his estate confiscated. Very soon the production of cloves became the dominant economic activity in Zanzibar. By 1845, the leading Omani families in Zanzibar and Pemba were growing more cloves than any other crops. In fact there was a considerable neglect of the growing of other crops like rice and coconut. Some caravan traders also switched over to clove plantation.

Up to the 1960s and 1970s, Zanzibar and Pemba supplied the world with most of the cloves that it consumed. In the days of the Omani empire, half of the cloves produced went to India. Cloves were also exported to Britain, United States of America, other European countries and China. Said himself was initially the major exporter of cloves.

Cloves were not the only export commodities of Zanzibar. Others included ivory, slaves, gum copal, cowries and agricultural products. In return, Zanzibar imported goods from India, China, America and Europe. These included manufactured cotton cloths, beads, wires, chains, guns, gunpowder, glass, knives, China earthen ware and axes.

The presence of American and other European traders as we have already noted, stimulated trade. More important, however, Said himself tried very hard to encourage production and trade. He himself was the chief merchant and cultivator of his empire. He was also the chief ship builder.

Another economic policy of Said was the encouragement of the settlement of more Indian traders in Zanzibar. They settled in large numbers in Zanzibar as customs agents, middlemen, money lenders and wholesale traders. Said decided that they were going to be useful in the commercial development of his empire. He appointed an Indian to become the chief customs officer of Zanzibar. This official directed most economic affairs in the state. He paid a yearly sum to the Sultan. Naturally he made much wealth. For example, between 1834 and 1853, customs in Zanzibar was farmed to an Indian called Jairam Sewji. He paid \$142,000 to Said every year. Other Indians were also in charge of the customs in almost all the important coastal stations like Kilwa, Bagamoyo, Pangani, Tanga and Mombasa.

The Indian businessmen and the custom officials collaborated to dominate the economy of the empire. For example, Indian businessmen bought goods from the European traders and sold them to the Swahili, Arab and other petty traders. They also gave money and commodities of trade as loan to the Arab and Swahili caravan traders who penetrated inland. Naturally, most profits of the trade went first to the Europeans and next to the Indians. Compare this with the case of Asante empire during the era of Osi Bonsu. The Asante at that time, we studied, encouraged foreign traders over the indigenous ones. The only difference here, perhaps, is that the rulers themselves were also not indigenous.

Zanzibar's economic relations with the East African Coast and its hinterland

By the 1870s, thanks largely to the efforts of Said, long distance trade routes radiated from the coastal towns into various points in the interior. Such coastal towns included Kilwa, Bagamoyo, Pangani, Tanga and Mombasa. Thus, most of the present day Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, eastern Zaire, northern Zambia, Malawi and northern Mozambique became integrated into Zanzibar's economic empire.

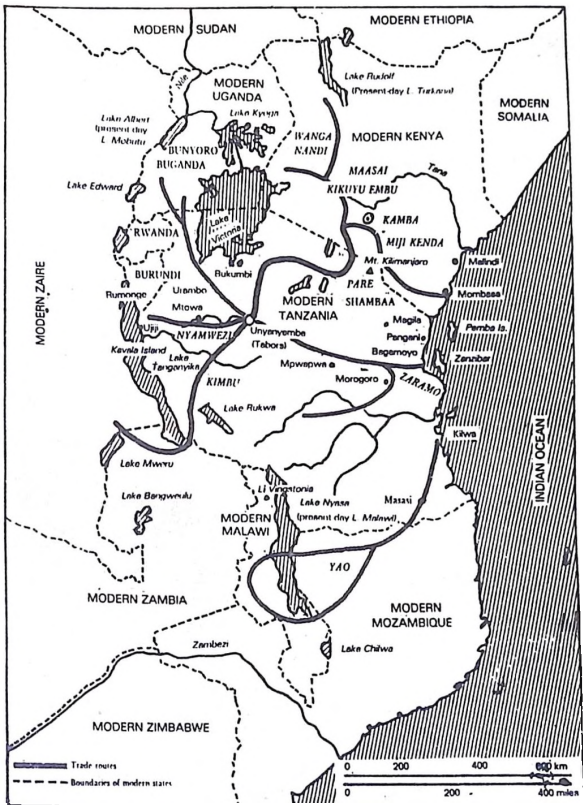
As we have already noted, Zanzibar was the centre of this trade.

European and other goods were brought by the foreign traders. These were bought wholesale largely by the Indian merchants who sold them to the Arab and Swahili caravan traders. There were, of course, rich Arab and Swahili merchants who bought goods directly from the foreign merchants. These goods were taken into the interior from the coastal towns through long distance routes mentioned above. These goods were then exchanged principally for slaves and ivory. These were the principal commodities demanded by Zanzibar merchants. Ivory, cloves and slaves, we have already noted, were the main export commodities of Zanzibar. Slaves were also needed in both Zanzibar and Pemba. They were made to work on the clove plantations. By the 1850s, Zanzibar was estimated to have had 150,000 inhabitants. Of this number, some 60,000 were slaves. Most of the slaves were, of course, exported to the Middle East, the Americas and some of the islands where plantation economy was being carried out.

In most cases, the long-distance caravan trade were started by the indigenous peoples. For example, the Yao in today's northern Mozambique were the ones who started the trade route which connected parts in modern Malawi and Mozambique to Kilwa. They were soon joined by the Bisa. However, by 1819, an Omani governor had been placed at Kilwa to oversee the trade. By the time Said came to Zanzibar the Arab and the Swahili had taken over the trade. By 1850, Kilwa had become the most important town on the coast between Mozambique and Zanzibar. It was exporting ivory, slaves, rice, gum copal and tobacco.

Farther north, the trade was dominated by the Nyamwezi, the Kamba and the Miji Kenda as far back as the late eighteenth century. In 1841, an Arab caravan crossed Lake Tangayika to reach eastern Zaire. By 1845, the Arab traders had reached Buganda. In Chapter 5, we shall examine how the Arabs replaced the Nyamwezi merchants. We shall also examine the impact of the coming of the Omani Arabs on the Buganda. As we have pointed out already, one aspect of this impact was the close relations between Kabaka Mutesa I and Sayyid Said and his successor.

The trade routes which started from Bagamoyo served areas in modern Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire. The Omani Arabs soon took over the distribution on these routes. Said encouraged the settlement of Arabs along important points of the routes. Some of these important settlements included Unyanyembe near present day Tabora in modern Tanzania and the other at Ujiji on the shores of Lake Tangayika. It was only in the latter part of the nineteenth century that the Arabs and the Swahili took over the trade routes that radiated from Mombasa. Originally it was dominated by the Kamba.



Trade routes linking the Coast with the East African Hinterland

The impacts of the Omani economic and political relations with the East African Coast and the interior

The first thing to note was the economic integration of the whole East African region under the domination of Zanzibar. Secondly there was the spread of Islam and Islamic culture in the area. Islam was adopted by many of the indigenous peoples. Even those who did not adopt Islam as a religion adopted the cultures of the coastal Arabs in dress, architecture, food and political structures. There were increased inter-marriages between the various groups. There were inter-marriages between the Arabs and the indigenous peoples. This included the Omani ruling family itself. All the concubines of Sayyid Said were Africans. It follows that all his children who succeeded him had African mothers. Finally, Kiswahili spread and became the dominant language in the region.

Questions

1. The Omani were
 - A. Muslim Arabs of Kharijite Ibadī sect from Zanzibar
 - B. Imams who had ruled Oman since A.D. 751
 - C. Muslim Arabs of Kharijite Ibadī sect from Oman
 - D. famous sailors and long distance traders from Arabia
 - E. those who followed Sayyid Said when he moved his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar
2. Which of these statements is correct?
 - A. Ahmed b. Said led the Omani to drive away the Portuguese from their country in the seventeenth century
 - B. By 1650, the Omani under the able leadership of Imam Sultan b. Saif were able to drive away the Portuguese from their country
 - C. By 1511, the Portuguese were driven away from Oman
 - D. Imam Sultan b. Saif led the Omani to drive away the Portuguese from their country in 1711
 - E. Imam Saif b. Sultan mobilised the Omani to drive the Portuguese from their land in 1668
3. What is the significance of Oman's victory over the Portuguese

in the histories of Oman and Zanzibar?

4. Discuss the Omani relations with the East African Coast and its islands between the death of Imam Saif b. Sultan and the ascension of Sa'yyid Said to power.
5. Explain the meaning of these terms:
 - i) Bint el-Imam
 - ii) Busaidi
 - iii) Swahili
 - iv) Jumbe
 - v) Wali
6. What strategies did Sayyid Said adopt in order to revive the Omani influence on the East African Coast and its islands?
7. Examine the factors which influenced the choice of Zanzibar as the capital of the Omani empire by Sayyid Said.
8. Discuss the role of Zanzibar as the economic nerve-centre of East Africa.
9. Write short notes on the following:
 - i) King Kimweri the Great
 - ii) Personal conduct of Sayyid Said
 - iii) The role of the Ulama in the affairs of the government of Zanzibar.

Further reading

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Chapter Three

European activities and the Omani empire

Introduction

The wish of Sayyid Said was to create a powerful Omani empire comprising his possessions in the Middle East and East Africa. However, as with other African leaders of the nineteenth century, the efforts of Sayyid Said were several decades too late. The European powers, by the middle of the nineteenth century, were well poised to start scrambling for the colonisation of the continent. In this chapter, therefore, we shall examine the increasing involvement of the European powers in the affairs of the Omani Sultanate culminating in her being colonised by Britain.

We shall first examine how the increasing prosperity of the Omani state attracted the attention of the Europeans. This was followed by the signing of commercial treaties. It also saw the appointment of consuls by the U.S.A. and the various European powers to Zanzibar. We shall then examine the death of Sayyid Said and the division of the Omani empire into two parts. We shall also examine the increasing European pressures on Zanzibar. These included the activities of the Missionary Societies and the British efforts at stopping the Arab East African slave trade. We shall also outline the individual reigns of the four immediate successors of Sayyid Said in Zanzibar. Finally we shall discuss the partition and colonisation of the Omani Sultanate of Zanzibar.

Commercial treaties between the Omani and the European powers

The growth of the Omani economy, as we have already noted, attracted the interests of the American and European traders to Zanzibar. This in turn led to the interest of the European and American governments in the affairs of the Omani government. At first the main interests of the European governments was to have favourable

trade relations with Zanzibar and the East African Coast. They also wanted to protect their citizens who traded in the Omani empire. This led them to sign commercial treaties with Sayyid Said.

In 1833, Sayyid Said signed a commercial treaty with the United States of America. The American traders were given very favourable treatment. They were asked to pay only 5 per cent duties on American goods imported into the Omani empire. On the other hand, they paid no duties at all on goods brought into Sayyid's East African territories. Following this treaty there was a tremendous increase in the volume of trade between the United States of America and the Omani empire. The Americans bought goods such as cloves, hides, cowries, beeswax, hippopotamus teeth, rhinoceros horn, gum and ivory. American goods imported into the Omani empire included guns and gunpowder, cotton clothes called *Merekani* ('American'), beads, sugar and brassware.

In 1838, the United States sold goods worth \$100,000.00 to the Omanis. This had risen to \$550,000.00 by the time Sayyid Said died in 1856. The United States was, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the most important western nation trading with Omani empire. In 1859, for example, there were 35 American trading ships which visited Zanzibar's port. In comparison, there was only one British trading ship which came throughout that year.

It was the fear of being overshadowed by the Americans that led the other European powers to also sign commercial treaties with Sayyid Said. The first was Britain in 1839. She was soon followed by the other European powers: France in 1844; German northern trading cities (called Hanseatic League) in 1859; Italy and Portugal in 1879; Germany in 1885; Austria and Hungary in 1887 and Russia in 1896.

The treaties guaranteed the Europeans many privileges. They were allowed to stay and trade in Zanzibar without difficulties. The treaties also guaranteed the European businessmen exemption from the payment of taxes while in the Omani empire. What could be noticed is that the Omani economy was extensively subordinated to that of Europe and America by the time of Sayyid Said's death.

Appointment of consuls

After the signing of the commercial treaties, most of the European governments appointed consuls to Zanzibar. Consuls were like ambassadors but very much less powerful than the latter. This, however, was not always so since some of the consuls in the nineteenth century were very powerful men. The consul was there to oversee the proper

application of the commercial treaty signed between his country and the Omani rulers. He was also there to protect citizens from his own country from all molestations. Normally he settled all disputes between the citizens from his country. He often also intervened in disputes between citizens from his own country and all others including those of the Omani empire.

Most consuls were themselves successful businessmen in the country. Some were also agents of trading companies from their own countries. This clearly shows that the primary responsibility of the consuls was the promotion of commerce. Mr Richard Palmer was the first American consul in Zanzibar; that of France was Mr Broquant. He, however, died of dysentery in Zanzibar. He was succeeded by M. de Beligny, a Creole from Santo Domingo. The two consuls who played great roles in the history of Zanzibar were, however, Lieut-Colonel Atkins Hamerton and Sir John Kirk. The former was the first British consul in Zanzibar from 1841 up to 1857. The latter was the British consul from 1868 to 1887. We shall say more about both of them later.

On the whole, the consuls prepared the ground for the colonisation of the East African region by the European powers. This was the same role that their counterparts played in the other parts of the continent. They supplied constant intelligent reports to their governments. They supported the activities of travellers and missionaries from their countries. They also participated in other political activities which undermined the authorities of the Omani rulers.

The death of Sayyid Said, the succession of Sayyid Majid and the division of Omani empire into two parts: 1856-1870

In 1856, as we have already noted, Sayyid Said died while returning from Muscat. The death of the great ruler, led to the reshaping of the history of the Omani empire. Sayyid Majid, the second surviving son of Sayyid Said in Zanzibar was elected the new ruler. He was about 22 years old at the time. He was also very popular among the Omani Arabs and the Wasawahili. However, many powerful people among the Omani ruling group felt that the throne should naturally have gone to Sayyid Thuwaini. The latter was the eldest surviving son of Sayyid Said. He was at the time of Said's death the Wali or governor of Muscat.

There followed intrigues between the brothers and their partisans.

Each formed his own party of followers and supporters in his own basé. Majid, however, had the problem of having a powerful opposition group in his own base. To make matters worse, the brothers finally resolved that their claims were to be decided by force of arms. Sayyid Thuwaini assembled his warriors in Muscat and prepared to sail for Zanzibar to fight for what he considered his rightful heritage. Majid backed by a very powerful group in Zanzibar was prepared to resist the invasion by every means at his disposal. The encounter between the brothers did not, however, take place. The British government intervened. It forced Sayyid Thuwaini to abandon his intention to invade Zanzibar. The trade in Zanzibar was very lucrative to the European powers. They did not want anything to disturb it. Moreover, Sayyid Majid, as soon as he came to power, assured the British government that he was going to be their friend and ally as his father had been. This accounted for the British government's intervention in the succession disputes on the side of Sayyid Majid.

Eventually, Britain was able to persuade the two rival Princes to subject themselves to an arbitration. The arbitrator whom the British appointed was Lord Canning. At that time the latter was the British Governor-General of India. Under the influence of Lord Canning, the brothers reached a final agreement in 1861. Sayyid Thuwaini was given the Sultanate of Oman. Sayyid Majid, on the other hand, was confirmed the Sultan of Zanzibar and all other Omani territories in East Africa. The Omani empire of Sayyid Said's dreams, for which he laboured so much in his lifetime, was thus dissolved into its original regional units.

Increasing European pressures on Zanzibar

The death of Sayyid Said in 1856 marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Zanzibar and East Africa. From then onwards, there was an increasing European pressure on Zanzibar which culminated into its being colonised. Let us outline some of these pressures.

Activities of Christian missionary societies and explorers

European economic and consular activities went hand in hand with other activities. One of these was missionary activities. Between 1844 and 1849, the Church Missionary Society had sent three German missionaries to Mombasa. Mombasa as we already know was one of the principal towns on the East African Coast under the rule of the

The work of the missionaries were to inspire the so-called 'journals of discoveries' undertaken by explorers like Burton, Speke and Livingstone.

The missionaries, led by Dr David Livingstone, embarked on a new tack on the East African Arab slave trade. Dr Livingstone was a number of pamphlets and articles. He also gave several public lectures on the slave trade. In all these activities he tried to show the evils of the Arab slave trade which he saw during his two journeys in East and Central Africa. He completed his second journey in 1856, but he never returned. Livingstone called for the establishment of 'legitimate commerce'. This means trade in goods other than human beings. This type of trade, he believed, would integrate Africa with Christian Europe. This was the only way, he said, that would lead to the end of the Arab slave trade in East Africa. From then on there were several 'journals of discoveries' by European explorers. Their main aim was to find navigable rivers through which Christianity and commerce were to penetrate into the interior.

In 1868 the Roman Catholic missionaries, known as White Fathers, opened a station at Bagamoyo. This was another main port of the Omani on the East African Coast. From Bagamoyo they later went inland to Tabora, still in modern Tanzania, where they established another station. They later spread into East and Central Africa, establishing several stations. They were part of the white missionaries who arrived at the court of the King of Buganda which we shall examine in another chapter.

The spread of missionary stations were not planless. They were built along the trade routes followed by the Omani and Swahili long distance traders into the interior. The aim of the missionaries was to weaken and eventually kill the Omani trade system. Colonies of freed slaves were settled at the missionary stations. They were converted into Christianity. They were later used to convert those slaves who were involved in carrying goods along the Omani and Swahili long distance caravan routes. In addition, slaves and freed slaves of the Omani and the Swahili were encouraged to run away from their masters to the missionary stations.

In addition to all the above, the missionaries attempted to build alternative commerce in the area. In fact many European long distance trade between the Coast and the interior were pioneered by the missionaries. For example, in 1872, Williams Mackinnon, a member of the Scottish Free Church started running his ships between Zanzibar and the East African Coast. This became very successful. He later convinced the Sultan of Zanzibar to approve his plan for building roads that would link the East African Coast with the interior. This,

however, did not materialise, but it really showed the way the Europeans were thinking.

On the whole, the missionaries helped a great deal in preparing the way for the colonisation of Zanzibar. They helped to weaken the economy of the state by sabotaging the long caravan trade on which it relied. They also helped to weaken the society by attracting the slaves, run-away slaves, ex-slaves, rebels and misfits in the society into their stations. These were converted into Christianity and helped in destabilising the social systems.

British efforts at stopping the Arab East African slave trade

One other increasing European pressure on the Omani empire, as the years rolled by, was their efforts in stopping the East African slave trade. We have already seen that it was the missionaries who publicised the evils of the slave trade going on in East Africa. They were also the ones who pioneered the efforts to control and if possible kill it. Their efforts continued up till about 1884. However, before then, the attention of Britain had already been drawn to the nature of the trade. We have already realised that it was Britain which started concrete efforts at stopping the slave trade. This we have already learnt in Book One. In addition, as we shall note further below, Britain had already established her influence on the Omani state even during the lifetime of Sayyid Said.

For a number of years, Britain, through her consul, Colonel Artkins Hamerton, tried to persuade Sayyid Said to stop the slave trade in the Omani State. In 1847, Sayyid Said and Hamerton signed what was termed Hamerton Treaty. In the treaty, Said agreed that slave trade should only be carried out in the territories under his control. Said, however, did not bother to enforce the treaty. In actual fact it is doubtful if he would have ever tried to. The reason was that the economy of Zanzibar relied very heavily on the slave labour. The clove plantations at Zanzibar and Pemba needed slave labour. In addition, the plantation agriculture kept on expanding until the last decades of the nineteenth century. Thus eventually more than half of the slaves acquired from the African mainland were absorbed in the clove plantations in Zanzibar and Pemba. We have also mentioned that many of the slave girls became concubines and wives of the Arabs and Swahili men. In addition, of course, a large number of the slaves obtained from the African interior were sent to the Gulf States. There they were used to supply the much needed labour.

We have already noted that the production of cloves led to less food production in Zanzibar and Pemba. Rice and grains had to be imported in a large scale to feed the increasing populations of the islands. Thus, a number of plantations producing grains sprang up along the coast between Pangani and Malindi. The grains were mainly sold to Zanzibar and Pemba. More and more slaves were needed to manage the plantations. This also increased the demand for slaves. In addition, this was the period when there was an increase in conflicts between the various peoples in the interior. In these wars, slaves were captured which means more and more of them were available for sale. Thus, the availability of slaves for sale also made it difficult to stop the trade. Finally, as we also noted, the other Europeans were never worried about the slave trade. Britain, which made itself the champion of stopping the trade was at first only concerned with the Atlantic slave trade. It was not until after the death of Sayyid Said that she came to be seriously concerned with the East African slave trade. This was as a result of the campaigns of the missionaries. It was also partly caused by the death of Sayyid Said which led to the split and eventual weakness of the Omani State. Finally, of course, this was the period of imperialism when all pressures were put on African rulers to accept the European economic and political domination.

Sayyid Majid (1856-1870) was as reluctant as his father Said in stopping the slave trade. It was only in 1873 that the British succeeded in forcing Sayyid Bargash (1870-1888) to issue a decree abolishing all trade in slaves by sea. This was achieved by intensified diplomacy and even threat. In 1876, the slave trade was abolished on the mainland of Africa. It was, however, a long time before either Britain or Zanzibar could effectively stop the slave trade. However, the pressure to stop the slave trade by Britain helped to undermine the Omani rulers. As in West Africa, which we read in book one, it prepared Zanzibar for eventual colonisation.

The era of Sayyid Said's immediate succession: 1856-1890

We have already started mentioning some of the activities of Said's successors. It should, however, be useful to examine in greater detail how each of them ruled. Four of Said's sons ruled one after another: Sayyid Khalifa (1888-1890) and Sayyid Ali (1890-1893). After the

death of Sayyid Ali, succession passed on to the grandchildren of Said down to the time when the monarchy was abolished in Zanzibar. Our interest, however ends with the reign of Sayyid Ali. This is because it was during the rule that Zanzibar became a British colony. We shall, however, leave discussions that directly led to the subjection of Zanzibar to the British rule to another section.

Sayyid Majid (1856-1870)

We have already mentioned Sayyid Majid in connection with the succession dispute between him and his elder brother, Sayyid Thuwaini. Majid, we noted, was helped to the throne by the British. However, we also noted that the Omani empire was permanently split at his ascension to power. From then onwards, the Sultanate of Oman and its dependencies ceased to be under the rule of the Sultans at Zanzibar. However, the ruling families of both Oman and Zanzibar continued to marry among themselves and to succeed in either of the Sultanates. For example the next ruler of Zanzibar after Ali (1890-1893) was Hamed b. Thuwaini b. Said (1893-1896). He was the first of Said's grandsons to become the Sultan of Zanzibar. He was also the son of Sayyid Thuwaini who contested the rule of the Sultanate at Zanzibar with Sayyid Majid.

Sayyid Majid, we noted, was very friendly to the British just as his father was. It was from his reign that the Sultans of Zanzibar started to become more and more involved with the British. Majid paid a royal visit to India in 1866. This was the time when India was the most precious of the British colonies. We should also not forget that it was a British Governor-General of India who acted as arbitrator between Majid and his brother Thuwaini. It was Majid who started the building of the town of Dar-as-Salam ('Haven of Peace') on the East African Coast. He intended to transfer his capital there so as to be able to effectively control the Sultanate. He, however, died before the project was completed. His successors shelved the idea of transferring the capital.

Majid also instituted the Order of the Brilliant Star of Zanzibar. This again was in imitation of the British M.B.E. (Member of the Order of British Empire) etc. In fact members of the order included the Omani and a number of European ruling families.

Sayyid Majid died in 1870 at the age of thirty-six. He had no son. He left only one daughter, She married her cousin Hamoud who eventually became a Sultan of Zanzibar in 1896-1902.

Sayyid Bargash was more like his father than Majid. He was ambitious and very energetic. In addition, Bargash had lived in Zanzibar for long. There he learnt the ways of the modern world. He was given new knowledge of new ideas which he tried to put into practice when he became the Sultan.

Sayyid Bargash tried to modernise Zanzibar. He built several palaces and houses all over the island. He also built what he called Bait-al-Karim or the 'House of Wonders'. It was later used as offices of many government departments. He built a very beautiful garden which he sometimes visited. Bargash also built a pure water supply system in Zanzibar. Up to about 1920, this water supply system was the best in the whole of East Africa. Some steamers on their way to the East even diverted their journeys to visit Zanzibar so as to get water there.

It was Sayyid Bargash who institutionalised the daily routine of the Sultan activities in Zanzibar. Much of these activities dealt with one religious activity or another. It was during his reign that an attempt was made to promote the Kharijite Ibadi sect over all the others. Every year he gave free passages in one of his ships to all those who wished to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. He also gave rich gifts and lavish entertainments to many of his subjects during Islamic festivals.

However, Sultan Bargash's rule helped to further integrate Zanzibar into the British informal empire. He was greatly influenced by Sir John Kirk. The latter was from 1868 up to 1887 the British consul in Zanzibar and East Africa. On the advice, perhaps of John Kirk, the British government officially invited Sayyid Bargash to visit England. He left Zanzibar for this visit in 1875. He was accompanied by John Kirk and numerous followers. He was received with royal honours throughout the visit. Before coming to England, he visited Portugal where he was received by the King of Portugal. In England, he was received and entertained by the Queen and her husband as well as other leading members of the royal family. He was taken to visit many interesting places in England. He had his picture drawn in one of such places. After his visit to England, Sayyid Bargash also visited France and Germany. He caused the account of his European visit to be written in Arabic. It was made into a book form with his picture on it.

Sayyid Bargash had a royal band that played the Zanzibar's national anthem. This was arranged by Lieutenant Dan Godfrey, an army officer of the Queen of England. He also ordered a gold

five-dollar coin (about 15 Riyals) to be minted. It had his name on one side. Sayyid Bargash also increased the practice of employing Europeans in the government of Zanzibar. For example, the commander-in-chief of his forces was a British citizen called General Lloyd Mathews.

Despite his close friendship with the British, this did not prevent the latter from allowing Germany to deprive the Sultan some of his territory. We shall examine this later on. But by the time Bargash died in 1888, the eventual colonisation of Zanzibar by Britain was a forgone conclusion.

Sayyid Khalifa I (1888-1890)

Sayyid Khalifa had before his coming to power been imprisoned for six years by Sultan Bargash. The latter is said to have accused Khalifa of political intrigues. The imprisonment is said to have mentally affected Khalifa. During his brief two-year rule, he was said to have lived almost a retired life. He was always in the company of his two friends, Salim b. Khalfan and Salim b. Khamis.

Although Sayyid Khalifa did not visit Europe, he sent an embassy there. The embassy was received by Queen Victoria of Britain, the emperor of Germany and the President of the French Republic. It is doubtful if the embassy gained anything useful for Zanzibar. This was the time when the Sultan was forced to allow a large part of his territory to fall under German rule.

Britain's interference in the affairs of Zanzibar increased during Khalifa's rule. When a British-Indian was charged with killing someone, his fellow countrymen feared that he might be executed. They therefore made a representation to Colonel Charles Euan-Smith the British consul in Zanzibar. The latter prevailed upon the Sultan not to kill the accused fellow and also to stop further execution of criminals.

Sayyid Ali (1890-1893)

Sayyid Ali, was the last son of Sayyid Said to ascend to the sultanhip of Zanzibar. Ironically, it was during Ali's reign that Zanzibar became a British colony.

Ali like most of his brothers whom he succeeded, died rather young. He was only thirty six years old (like Majid) when he died. He left only one son who died soon after Ali.

The partition and colonisation of the Omani sultanate of Zanzibar

We have already noted that Britain had been gaining economic, political and cultural influences over the Omani State from the time of Sayyid Said up to that of Ali when she finally colonised Zanzibar. We have also mentioned some of the events under the rule of the various Sultans who succeeded Said. Now let us discuss the scramble and final partition of Zanzibar as well as its colonisation.

Britain was at first satisfied with maintaining the Omani State of Zanzibar as an informal colony. No European power questioned her supreme authority on the island sultanate as well as her East African coastlands. However, in 1885, Germany challenged that supremacy. The German Colonial Society with the blessings of the German government sent a man named Carl Peters to East Africa. The latter was a fanatical advocate of German colonisation. He entered into a number of treaties with the indigenous chiefs and peoples who were settled in the area west of Bagamoyo. In the treaties, the Africans were tricked into giving their territories to Carl Peters. The latter went back to Germany where he founded the German East African Company. The company was to exploit and administer the territory which Carl Peters claimed he obtained through the alleged treaties. The German government not only blessed the venture but also gave a charter to the East African Company. It was thus to operate just like the Royal Niger Company which was given a charter by Britain to operate in Nigeria. In the German case, however, everything was kept secret until the company was formed and ready to operate. The territory concerned was about 96,000 kilometres.

Both Britain and Sayyid Bargash were surprised and disturbed by the action of Germany. It should be noted that the area concerned was an undisputed Omani territory. For Britain, the surprise was that she did not suspect the Germans had colonial design on East Africa. Her fear was France, her main colonial rival. Sayyid Bargash, as soon as he learnt what was happening, protested vehemently. To his surprise, however, Britain which he thought would support him allowed Germany to annex his territory. This was announced on 28 April 1885.

The Sultan of Zanzibar, however, was not a man to allow things to take place without doing something. He dispatched his troops under General Lloyd into the mainland in an effort to prevent the Germans from annexing his territory. He also decided to undertake a journey to Berlin where he hoped to lay his case before the German Emperor. His friend and adviser, Sir John Kirk advised him against taking the trip to Germany. His army was also unable to prevent the Germans

from taking possession of the territory they earmarked for themselves.

When the Sultan refused to accept the German annexation of his territory, a formidable German squadron was sent to Zanzibar. They arrived there on 7 August 1885. The Sultan was given an ultimatum to recognise the German annexation of his territory or face attack. Sayyid Bargash was forced to accept the robbery of his territory. It was a bitter feeling.

In the beginning of November 1886, Britain, France and Germany met to decide on the partitioning of the Omani possessions in East Africa. The islands of Zanzibar, Pemba, Lamu and Mafia were recognised as belonging to the rule of the Sultan. In addition, Bargash was also allowed the control of a strip of land 16 kilometres in width on the coast. The length was from the Rovuna River to Tana River. However, the agreement stipulated that the Sultan would lease the ports of Dar es Salam and Pangani to the German East African Company. This was done without consulting the Sultan. Sultan Bargash felt humiliated by this development. Worse still, the British whom he naively thought were his friends came out in their true colours. They participated actively in the dismemberment of his territory. The Sultan soon died a broken-hearted man at Zanzibar in 1888. He was aged fifty-five years.

When the weak Sayyid Khalifa came to power in 1888, he was forced to lease the entire 16 kilometre coast from River Ruvuma to River Uмба to the German Company. With this lease, the Germans were given free access to the Coast. In addition, all the main Arab and Swahili caravan routes were thus placed under the German control. As one writer put it, that was the beginning of the end of the Omani sultanate of Zanzibar.

On 16 August 1888, the German Company took direct control of the administration of the Coast from the Sultan's government. However, the brutality of German officials angered the people. Not only that, the people saw themselves as subjects of the Sultan of Zanzibar. They never recognised the German rule. There followed a mass revolt of the people against the German rule. The revolt was ruthlessly suppressed. The revolt of the coastal people against the Company's oppressive rule gave Germany the excuse she wanted. The administration of the whole region was taken over by the German government. The whole area was purchased at four million German marks. The money was given to the British Government. The latter paid an annual interest of two hundred thousand pounds into the Zanzibar treasury. The negotiations were not made with the Sultan. He also had very little say in the matter of the payment.

Finally on 4 November 1890, Britain took over the direct control of Zanzibar and her dependencies when it declared the sultanate a British protectorate.

Questions

1. The European and American governments signed commercial treaties with the Omani government because
 - A. they did not want to be cheated by the Arab and Waswahili businessmen
 - B. Sayyid Said decreed that no one should engage in business in the Omani empire unless he was covered by a commercial treaty
 - C. European and American governments wanted to have favourable trade relations with Zanzibar and the East African Coast
 - D. this was the only way the Omani Sultan could protect his citizens from being cheated by the European businessmen
 - E. there was intensive rivalry between the various European traders

2. Consuls were
 - A. representatives of the various European companies in Zanzibar who dealt with the Omani government.
 - B. representatives of the various European governments who oversaw the proper application of the treaties signed with their governments
 - C. representatives of the various European citizens appointed by the Sultan of Zanzibar
 - D. representatives of the European businessmen in Zanzibar chosen by themselves
 - E. representatives of leading European businessmen in Zanzibar

3. The Omani Sultans of Zanzibar found it difficult to stop slave trade because
 - A. their citizens would have revolted if the trade was stopped
 - B. the economy of Zanzibar and the East African Coast relied heavily on slave labour
 - C. with the exception of Britain, many of the other European powers encouraged the East African slave trade

- D. the Omani Sultans had no means of effectively stopping the trade
- E. it was only through slave trade that the Omani Arabs could secure wives and concubines
4. Write short notes on three of the following:
- i) Sir John Kirk
 - ii) Sayyid Majid
 - iii) Sayyid Khalifa I
 - iv) Sayyid Thuwaini
 - v) Colonel Artkius Hamerton
5. Discuss the American commercial relations with Zanzibar up to 1860.
6. Examine the significance of the death of Sayyid Said in the history of the Omani empire.
7. Outline the activities of the Christian missionary societies and their impact on the Omani sultanate.
8. Outline the highlights of Sayyid Bargash's rule over Zanzibar. What should be his place in the history of the Omani empire?
9. List at least six actions by the Sultans of Zanzibar to show that they had already fallen under the economic, political and cultural influence of Britain even before Zanzibar was formally colonised.
10. Trace and discuss the developments that led to the partition and colonisation of the sultanate of Zanzibar.

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Chapter Four

Buganda in the nineteenth century

Introduction

Buganda is situated around the northwestern shores of Lake Victoria. It was one of the several precolonial states in the area which formed the Republic of Uganda. Kampala, the capital of Buganda and seat of her former Kabakas or kings, is today the capital of the whole of Uganda. In fact Uganda was the British way of pronouncing Buganda.

Buganda has an equatorial climate. This means it enjoys heavy rainfalls most of the year. The rains are more heavy around the shores of Lake Victoria. They decrease as one moves inland. Most of the area around the lake was infested by tse-tse fly. The grass around the area was also not good for cattle. From its early history, therefore, the heartland of Buganda was attracted to settled farmers.

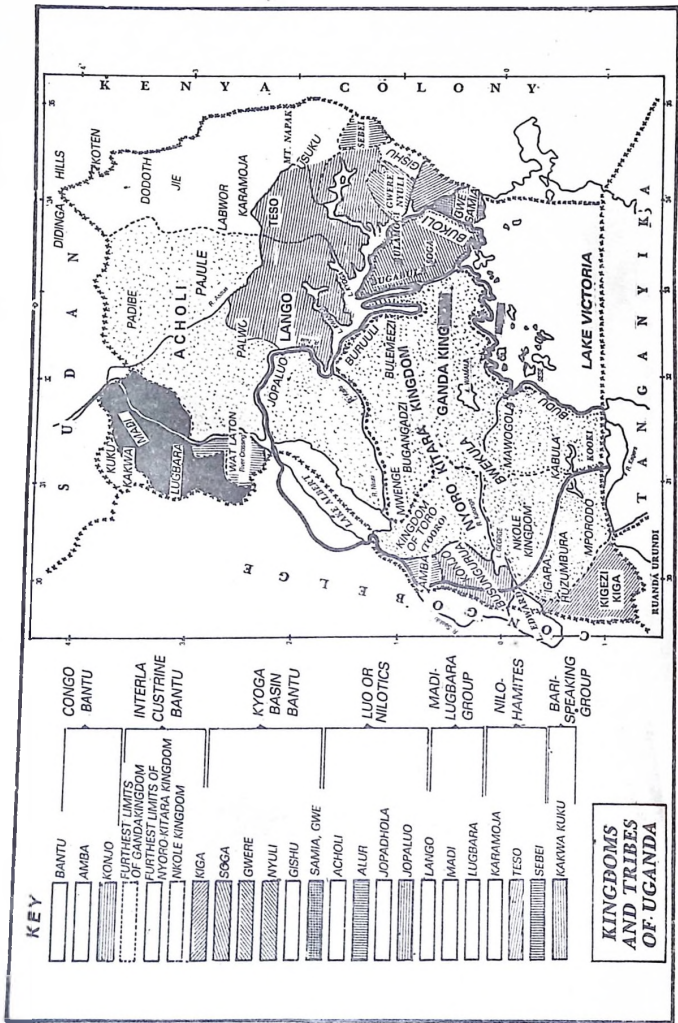
Trade and politics in Buganda to C. 1870

In this chapter we shall discuss the following:

- a) Buganda society and government in the nineteenth century;
- b) Buganda economy before the coming of the Arabs;
- c) Buganda and her neighbours in the nineteenth century;
- d) The coming of the Zanzibari Arabs and their role in transforming the Bugandan society and economy in the nineteenth century.

The Buganda society and government in the nineteenth century

The Buganda (i.e. people of Buganda) belong to the Bantu speaking peoples of eastern and southern Africa. The ancestors of the Baganda were of different origins. Over the centuries, however, they came to speak one language called Luganda or the language of the Buganda. They also came to have more or less similar customs and traditions. The Buganda society is made up of about 40 clans. The majority of the



Uganda and the states that formed it in 1907

ancestors of these clans were said to have settled in Buganda by 1500 A.D. The only exception were the five Sese clans who became part of Buganda in the nineteenth century and the six Buddu clans which were conquered by Kabaka Junju in the nineteenth century.

Every *Muganda* (plural: *Baganda*) is a member of one clan or the other. All members of a particular clan trace their origins to a common male ancestor. This means they are patrilineal. A man, his sons, his daughters and the children of his sons belong to his clan. On the other hand, his wife and the children of his daughters belong to different clans. A *Muganda* is prohibited from marrying a member of his or her clan. In addition, no one is allowed to marry a member of his or her mother's clan. It was only the Kabaka, as we shall see, who was allowed to do that.

All the *Baganda* clans are totemic. This means each clan is associated with a particular bird, insect, animal or plant. A clan is known by the name of its totem. For example there is Bird clan, Monkey clan, Yam clan, Lungfish clan, Lion clan, Grasshopper clan, Mushroom clan and so on.

The *Baganda* have many beliefs associated with their totems. Generally, they do not eat the meat of the totemic animals. For example, members of the Leopard clan do not eat the meat of Leopards. They also do not eat the meat of any animal which has been attacked by a Leopard. Members of the Mushroom clan do not eat the plant. Female members of the Grasshopper clan do not eat the insect.

The *Baganda* society was highly stratified. This means there were several classes, each below the other. At the top was the king. Then in descending order were members of the royal family; various categories of chiefs, royal servants, peasants and slaves. However, the *Baganda* society was highly flexible. Origins or birth did not hinder a man rising from a very low class to a high one.

Religious beliefs

Up to the end of the nineteenth century, the 'ancestor worship' was the predominant religion of the *Baganda*. People died but their spirits were believed to have continued to live with the living members of their families. Through their spirits, the dead, it was believed, would be able to help or to harm the living. It was, therefore, necessary to periodically make sacrifices at the shrines or graves of the dead ancestors.

One of the most important ways to justify ownership of land was the proof that one's parents or grandparents were buried on the land.

The Kabakas or kings were always buried in the palaces where they lived. These burial sites were turned into royal tomb-shrines. The royal tombs were supervised by a very high officer of the state. Periodically sacrifices were made at the royal tombs of the immediate past kings.

The Baganda also worshipped several gods. These included *kibuga* the god of war, *Mukasa* the god of the sea and *Ndula* the god of the small pox. All the gods had shrines where priests acted as their mouth-pieces. The priests explained the messages of the gods. The priests were highly respected and feared by even the kings. They were, therefore, very powerful.

Government

In their early history each clan was independently ruled by its clan head or the *Mutaka* (plural: *Bataka*). The title was hereditary in one family of each clan. Kintu is claimed by traditions to have been the first Kabaka or king of Buganda. Some traditions say he came with his followers from the north. Other traditions say Kintu descended from the sky. It was, however, Kimera who was said to have founded the Buganda royal dynasty.

Kintu and Kimera are both legendary figures. Their stories are like the ones of Bayajidda among the Hausa and Oduduwa among the Yoruba. Like the latter we are not sure whether Kintu and Kimera ever existed.

Most historians believe that by the fourteenth century, the office of the Kabaka had emerged in Buganda. It was however, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that the office became very important. By the nineteenth century the Kabaka of Buganda was one of the most powerful rulers of precolonial Africa. By then every aspect of the life of the Baganda evolved around their king. He was like the king of Dahomey whom we examined in Book One.

The Kabaka took wives from as many of the clans as possible. This meant that all the clans had hopes of having 'their sons' becoming the Kabaka. In fact there was no royal clan in Buganda. All members of the royalty, whether male or female, belonged to the clans of their mothers. In addition all princesses were never allowed to marry. They were also never allowed to produce any children. In addition to the marriage ties with the Kabaka, each clan was supposed to perform one function or the other for him. For example, the chief butler of the Kabaka had to come from the Colubus Monkey clan. A member of the Otter clan looked after the king's tobacco. The Sheep supplied priests

to the royal family. The head of the Monkey clan was in charge of all the tombs and temples of the Kabakas. Other clans supplied one function or the other to the Kabaka.

Once selected by the leading men of the kingdom, the Kabaka had to undergo various succession rituals. Once the rituals were over, the Kabaka was believed to have become a sacred being. He was considered above the needs of ordinary men. The Kabaka did not sleep. He merely 'rested'. The Kabaka did not eat. He was said to be 'among the baskets'.

There was a hut in the palace where a sacred fire was lit when a new Kabaka mounted the throne. It was permanently kept burning. It was only put out when the Kabaka died. It was not lit again until a new Kabaka was selected. In 1939 when Kabaka Sir Daudi Chwa died, this was how the *Katikiro* (Prime Minister) announced his death:

The fire of Buganda is extinguished. Our beloved Kabaka
His Highness Sir Daudi Chwa released his hold on the
shield at 7 o'clock this morning.

Buganda, unlike Dahomey in West Africa, did not have an efficient rule of succession. Every *Mulangira* (plural: *Balangira*) or prince was a potential candidate for the office of the Kabaka. This meant that there was a continuous rivalry among the princes. This did not stop even after one of them succeeded in becoming the Kabaka. In fact from the seventeenth century onwards many of the Kabakas were assassinated by their rivals to the throne. The Kabaka was both the political head as well as the military leader of Buganda. He appointed all categories of chiefs. He had the powers to dismiss any officer from his office. In theory the life of every Buganda was at the disposal of the king.

Buganda had very powerful female royal title holders. There was the *Namagole* or the queen mother and the *Nalinya* or the queen. The former was the mother of the king and the latter his half-sister. They both had large estates. They had a large number of slaves and followers. In fact like the Kabaka the *Namagole* and the *Nalinya* also had their own courts with their own titled officers. They were very powerful. However, the queen mother must never remarry or bear any other children. The *Nalinya*, although a sister to the Kabaka, was officially his wife. However, she too was never allowed to bear any children. We should note that the Kabaka was allowed to marry from his own clan. He was even mandated to perform incest. This was because both the Kabaka and the *Nalinya* must be of the same father although of different mothers.

The king had a council called the *Lukiko*. It was attended by the important dignitaries of the state. Important matters of state were

decided at the Lukiko. The highest dignitary in the state was the Katikiro or the prime minister. He deputised for the king. Most messages from the king came through him. The Katikiro held office at the king's pleasure.

The country was divided into several countries or provinces each under a *Mukungu* (plural: *Bakungu*) or provincial governor. The *Bakungu* were very powerful in their provinces. However, they were bound to spend certain months of the year at the king's court in the capital. They were represented in their provinces by their assistants. The latter were also appointed by the Kabaka. The countries were sub-divided into sub-countries, districts, villages, hamlets or wards. All these were ruled by a hierarchy of officials. All of them stayed in office at the pleasure of the king. Many of the chiefs had official functions at the court.

The Bataka or clan heads were a powerful class of title holders. They performed both political as well as religious duties to their clans. Their offices were also hereditary as we have already noted. But even here the Kabaka could remove a Mutaka and appoint a member from his family to replace him.

The *Bakopi* or peasants attached themselves to one chief or the other. A *Mukupi* (plural: *Bakopi*) was duty-bound to follow the chief to war when summoned. In peace time he engaged in other occupations. He may be required to pay tax to his chief. In return the chief gave the *Mukupi* land. He also gave him a wife or two. When he was dissatisfied with his chief, a *Mukupi* had the right to leave him and chose another master.

The detailed hierarchical political structure of pre-colonial Buganda was greatly admired by the British. They modified it and applied it to the whole of Uganda during the time of their rule. In fact Lugard who introduced indirect rule in Nigeria was the first colonial administrator of Uganda. It was in Buganda that he first noted the efficient pre-colonial African structure which he so admired.

Buganda economy before the coming of the Arabs

Farming, as we have already noted, was the most important occupation of the Baganda. Every Muganda, whether a chief or a peasant, had his own *Kabinje* or farm. Most work on the farm was done by women. Men only helped when a virgin land was to be cleared for farming. The chief crop of the Baganda was the banana. It was used as food. Its leaves and fibres were used in making baskets and mats. The ash obtained by burning its leaves was used to produce soap. Men usually engaged themselves in bark-cloth-making, house-build-

ing, making of iron or copper implements, fishing, hunting, tanning, road-making, manufacture of candles, canoe-making and fighting wars.

The manufacture of bark-cloth was a specialised occupation of the Baganda. They produced very beautiful soft-cloth from beating the barks (or outer covering) of some trees. The bark-cloth was worn by the Baganda. It was also eagerly sought after by their neighbours.

In their early history the Baganda obtained their hoes, axes and spears from the kingdom of Bunyoro. But after the conquest of the Buddu clans in the eighteenth century, Buganda began to produce some of her iron and copper implements. The people of Buddu had excellent smiths who produced beautiful iron ornaments like bracelets and weapons like copper spears.

It was also in the eighteenth century that Kabaka Nwanda (c. 1717-1744) captured the Mabira forest of Kyaggwe from Bunyoro. The forest was home to numerous elephants. These were hunted for their tusks or ivory. Before the coming of the Arabs ivory discs were made from the tusks of the elephants. After the coming of the Arabs, ivory became an important export commodity of the Baganda.

Before the second half of the eighteenth century, Buganda and her neighbours did not have any major trade relations with the other parts of the world. This was unlike west and north Africa as we have examined in Book one. Whatever the Baganda produced was mainly for their own use. However, from early times the Baganda exchanged some of their products with those of their neighbours. Even after the conquest of the Buddu clans, iron was still bought from Bunyoro. The Baganda also bought salt, dried fish and clay pots from some of their neighbours. From their neighbouring pastoral peoples they bought cattle, sheep and goats. In exchange the Baganda gave out bananas, coffee and bark-cloth. They also sold canoes to those who settled near rivers or banks of the Lake.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Buganda expanded in all directions. It came to include many people. In addition many areas with useful products were brought into the kingdom. After about 1800 the policy of expanding the kingdom stopped. From then on raids into enemy territories were not aimed at capturing territory. The raids were aimed at capturing booties in livestock, slaves and ivory.

Thus by the beginning of the eighteenth century Buganda had become a strong and prosperous state. The Kabaka and his chiefs had become rich. They could then afford to buy luxury items from distant areas. It was, therefore, not surprising that in the second half of the eighteenth century the Nyamwezi started to visit Buganda. The Nyamwezi lived on the highlands of modern Tanzania. They were

great long-distance traders. They soon established a trade network that linked Buganda and her neighbours to the East African Coast. They sold coloured beads, baskets and Chinaware. From Buganda they bought bark-cloth, iron bracelets and copper spears. These they resold to many other African peoples.

By the 1830s the Baganda themselves were taking part in the long-distance trade. They sent their own caravans with ivory and a few slaves up to the coast. Some of these caravans contained up to two hundred or more people. The Kabaka himself monopolised most of the trade with the outside world.

Buganda and her neighbours in the nineteenth century

In the early sixteenth century, Buganda was only one of the numerous tiny states in the lake region of East Africa. However, by the time Kabaka Mutesa I (c. 1856-1884) died Buganda had become a dominant power in the region. She had by then absorbed many former independent states. Many others were paying her tributes.

There were many reasons which contributed to the growing powers of the Buganda. We have seen that farming was largely carried out by women. Men were therefore largely left to engage themselves in other occupations. One of these was fighting. Over the years the Baganda became very skilful warriors. They fought their enemies on land and in their war canoes in water. There were no standing or organised armies in Buganda. Every able-bodied peasant was bound to follow his chief when summoned to war. Important battles were led by the Kabakas themselves. At other times the Kabaka appointed one of the chiefs to lead the army. A chief so appointed was called the *Mugabe*.

The Baganda were loyal to the Kabaka and their chiefs. They believed that fighting their enemies was a duty which they had to perform. They were also encouraged by their continuous successes in battle. In addition there were booties to be distributed after each successful raid. All these encouraged the Baganda to courageously and faithfully follow their leaders into battle against their enemies.

The Baganda, like the Asante and the Fon which we examined in Book One, were blessed with excellent leaders. Many of the Kabakas who ruled in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were skilled diplomats, brave generals and great empire builders. Kataregga (c. 1636 - 1663), Nwanda (c. 1717 - 1744) and Junju (1771 - 1798) were, for example, all concerned with expanding the kingdom. Also the con-

tinuous decline of the kingdom of Bunyoro contributed to the expansion of Buganda. Bunyoro had always been Buganda's strongest neighbouring rival. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Bunyoro was more powerful than Buganda. Many of the smaller states in the region paid tribute to Bunyoro. In most conflicts between the two states Bunyoro usually defeated Buganda. Kabakas Kayima (c. 1528 - 1555) and Nakibinge (c. 1555 - 1582) were both defeated and killed when they fought Bunyoro. However, by the middle of the seventeenth century, Bunyoro had started to decline. From that time onwards Buganda became stronger and stronger. She was able to conquer many areas which formerly were under Bunyoro. The decline of Bunyoro was therefore another contributory factor to the growth of Buganda.

An important phase of territorial expansion for Buganda really started with the rule of Kabaka Kinbugwe (c. 1609 - 1636). This was continued during the rule of Kateregga (c. 1636 - 1663) and Mutebi (c. 1663 - 1690). The most important conqueror during the seventeenth century expansions was Kateregga. It was during his time that Magula, Busunju and many others were conquered. Kabaka Nwanda (c. 1717 - 1744) was one of the greatest of the kings of Buganda. He was a very brave general. One of his policies on coming to the throne was to expand the kingdom. After several engagements he inflicted a heavy defeat on Bunyoro. This made it possible for him to conquer Kyaggwe and Bulemezi states. These were formerly tributary states to Bunyoro. He also forced the Busoga states to pay tribute to Buganda.

Kabaka Junju (c. 1771 - 1798) continued the struggle with Bunyoro and other neighbouring states. In the end he was able to annex Buddu. He also forced the kingdom of Kooki and the Buhaya states to pay tribute to Buganda. His death ended the expansion phase of Buganda. From then onwards raid into neighbouring states were not aimed at conquering more land. The aim was to capture booties in slaves, cattle and Ivory.

The Buganda kingdom did not expand only through conquest. The Kabakas formed series of alliances with some of their neighbours. For example Kabaka Nakibinge (c. 1515 - 1528) allied with the Ssesse clans in order to fight Bunyoro. This alliance became permanent during the rule of Mulondo (c. 1582 - 1609). This was the period when the Ssesse clans became part of Buganda. Kabaka Junju allied with the Maguta in his attempt to conquer the Buddu.

Once Buganda became a powerful state many other small neighbouring states sought protection. These included the Busoga states, Bwera and Toro.

The coming of the Arabs and their role in the transformation of the Buganda society and economy in the nineteenth century

We have stated that the Nyamwezi dominated the long distance trade between Buganda and the East African Coast. Soon, however, they started to face competition from the Zanzibari Arabs. This became more intense after 1840 when Sultan Sayyid Said moved his headquarters of the Omani empire to Zanzibar. Said organised large armed Arab trading caravans which went into the interior. They followed the routes which were formerly used by the Nyamwezi. They sold coloured beads, Indian clothes, guns and gunpowder and many other articles.

The Arabs were first attracted to Buganda by the trade in Ivory. But very soon the Arabs were also interested in slaves. The latter were needed by the Europeans who were settled on the Island of Mauritius. They were also needed by the clove planters on the Island of Zanzibar. Finally slaves were still demanded by the plantation owners in the Americas. During the rule of Kabaka Suna (c. 1840 - 1856) the Arabs visited Buganda intermittently. In 1844 a Zanzibari Arab named Ahmad b. Ibrahim became a close associate of Kabaka Suna. The Arab was said to have preached Islam to the Kabaka. The latter listened but was not converted. In fact eight years later Kabaka Suna expelled the Zanzibari Arabs from Buganda. They were found to have been molesting their Buganda servants. However, during the rule of Kabaka Mutesa I (c. 1856 - 1884) many Arabs came to Buganda. They were welcomed by Mutesa. We may well ask, why did Mutesa I welcome the Arabs?

The Kabaka, as we have already noted, dominated all the trade between Buganda and other parts of the world. This meant that he hoped to benefit personally in the trade with the Arabs. Secondly, Kabaka and other members of the ruling group had become very rich. They were now in great demand of expensive goods from distant lands. The Arabs supplied those goods. Thirdly, Mutesa wanted to modernise Buganda. The Arabs were widely travelled. They knew how things were done in many parts of the world. Mutesa, therefore, wanted to use the Arabs as advisers in his court. The Arabs also brought guns and ammunition which were highly valued by the Kabaka. In fact the Arabs, sometimes sent their armed slaves to help the Kabaka in his various battles. Mutesa also wanted the world to know his existence as a mighty and wise ruler. The Arabs were seen as the agents who could spread the good name of the Kabaka to the outside world. Finally, Kabaka Mutesa highly valued the charms,

medicines and prayers of the Arab Muslims.

The warm reception which the Arabs received from the Kabaka encouraged many of them to visit Buganda. Eventually many of them stayed in Buganda for many years. They married Buganda women and thus became integrated into the Buganda society. In fact many of the Arabs were given important posts in the government. For example, Idi became Mutesa's scribe. He later became the chief of Kiteregga, an important province situated on the borders with Bunyoro. Masudi, another Arab, was appointed Mutesa's interpreter. He too was later given another important political post in addition to his job as interpreter.

The first impact of the coming of the Arabs to Buganda was the introduction of Islam. Mutesa himself led the way when in about 1865 he became a Muslim. For the next ten years he practised the religion zealously. He learnt Arabic and read the Quran. He prayed and fasted. He adopted Muslim mode of dressing. The Islamic calendar was adopted. Mutesa also supervised the building of mosques not only at his court but also in other parts of Buganda. Periodically the Kabaka himself preached Islam in his court. He ordered all those around him to become Muslims and at times punished those who did not. He drove away his favourite hunting dogs. They were formerly his pride but now that he was a Muslim, they were considered unclean animals. Sometime in about 1875 Mutesa adopted a red flag resembling that of the Sultan of Zanzibar. He also sent a Muslim mission to convert Kabarega, the king of Bunyoro. At one time during this period he proclaimed Buganda an Islamic state.

Despite the enthusiasm of the Kabaka, however, not many Buganda became Muslims. In fact, as we shall see later, even Mutesa's enthusiasm in Islam later waned. However the coming of the Muslim Arabs and especially the conversion of Kabaka Mutesa played a great role in changing the Buganda society. Many leading officers in the government followed the example of the Kabaka and became Muslims. By the end of Mutesa's reign the Buganda who were converted to Islam came to occupy important posts in the administration. They were headed by the Muguluma, an important chief who later became the Katikiro or prime minister. In addition many servants at the court of the Kabaka also became Muslims. In fact the enthusiasm which the court servants displayed for Islam later alarmed even the Kabaka himself. They refused to eat the remnant of his food which they formerly considered an honour and privilege. Their argument was that the animals with whose meat the food was prepared were not slaughtered in the Muslim way. Although Mutesa

ordered many of them to be killed, they remained unshaken. Many of the court servants received Arab Muslim names.

The coming of the Arabs also helped to change the way of dressing of the Baganda. Cotton cloth which the Arabs introduced spread extensively in Buganda. Formerly, only the king, the queen mother, the queen and one or two dignitaries were allowed to wear cotton clothes in Buganda. A Baganda would be executed if he wore a cotton cloth without royal permission. Now the Baganda were allowed to wear *Kanzus*, a long white Arab gown reaching the ankles. They were also permitted to wear cotton trousers. Mutesa and members of his court were always dressed in rich Arab robes. In fact Arab robes became the official robes of the Kabaka and his officers.

Copper and gold bangles which were also brought by the Arabs became very popular with the wives of the leading men in the kingdom. Many people began to build rectangular houses in imitation of the Arabs. Before this time the Baganda built circular houses. In addition to the above, the coming of the Arabs led to the change of money in Buganda. At first blue beads gave way to the ivory discs. But later the Arabs helped to introduce cowry shells as money all over Buganda.

Mutesa, once he became a Muslim, introduced some further changes in Buganda. He reduced the powers and influence of the priests. These we saw were very powerful and were respected even by the king. With the help of the guns and ammunition obtained from the Arabs, Mutesa was able to build a powerful army. In fact he created a modern armed guard modelled on that of Zanzibar. It was known as the *Etingole*.

Finally, it was also the coming of the Arabs which increased the slave trade in Buganda. We have already noted why the Arabs were in great demand of slaves. Now Baganda chiefs sold their slaves which they obtained largely from wars.

After 1875 the Kabaka's enthusiasm for Islam waned. It was caused by many factors. We have already noted that the palace servants who became Muslims were already insulting the royal person of the king. This was also the time when Egypt under Khedive Ismail attempted to colonise part of Buganda. Egypt like Zanzibar which the Kabaka admired was also a Muslim state. The third reason was the fact that Europeans had by then started to come to Buganda. Their coming opened the eyes of the Kabaka to the fact that the Muslim Arabs were not the only ones who had guns and ammunition. In spite of this, however, Mutesa remained a Muslim even after the coming of the Christian missionaries. Between 1879 and 1880 he

loved with both Catholicism and Protestantism. Then in mid-1880 he had a dream in which he was reproached for his neglect of Islam. After his dream he became a strong Muslim again. In 1881 he even proclaimed Buganda a Muslim state. However, his subjects were allowed to follow the religion of their choice.

Questions

1. The Kabaka
 - A. was allowed to marry any woman whom he fancied in Buganda
 - B. was allowed to marry women from some certain clans
 - C. was allowed to marry foreign women
 - D. was not allowed to marry women who already had children
 - E. was allowed to marry as many women as possible from all the Baganda clans

2. The Namusole and the Nalinya
 - A. always accompanied the Kabaka wherever he went
 - B. had their own courts, separate from the Kabaka where they ruled like the Kabaka
 - C. checked the powers of the Kabaka
 - D. moved with their followers from one area to another
 - E. did not participate in any aspect of the government

3. Before the coming of the Arabs only few members of the ruling group wore cotton cloth. This was because
 - A. the kings did not want the Baganda to stop wearing bark-cloth
 - B. the Baganda religion did not allow the wearing of cotton clothes
 - C. before the coming of the Arabs there were very few cotton clothes
 - D. the Baganda did not know how to wear cotton clothes
 - E. the Baganda weather was not good for wearing cotton clothes

4. On a map of East Africa
 - i) indicate the position of Buganda along Lake Victoria;
 - ii) show the position of Bunyoro;

- iii) show the boundary of Buganda in the first quarter of nineteenth century.
5. What is the significance of the banana production in the precolonial history of Buganda?
 6. Discuss the Baganda society before the coming of the Arabs.
 7. Why was the Kabaka considered one of the most powerful individuals in precolonial Africa?
 8. It was only in the second half of eighteenth century that the Baganda started to trade with distant lands. Why was that so?
 9. What were the reasons that led to the expansion of Buganda in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries?
 10. Why did Kabaka Mutesa I welcome the Arabs?

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Chapter Five

New developments and British occupation of Buganda

Introduction

In this chapter we shall discuss the following:

- a) Christian missionary activities and new divisions in the Baganda society;
- b) Kabaka Nwanga and efforts at balancing Christian and Muslim interests;
- c) The Buganda civil wars of 1888-1890;
- d) The Imperial British East Africa Company and the colonisation of Buganda;
- e) The role of Buganda in the British occupation of Uganda.

Christian missionary activities and new divisions in the Baganda society

In the previous chapter, we saw that like Islam, Christianity also came to Buganda during the rule of Kabaka Mutesa I. It was brought by European missionaries. Let us examine how Christianity came to Buganda.

In 1862 two Englishmen, John Hamilton Speke and his travelling companion Captain Grant arrived in Buganda. They were part of the European travellers who were involved in the 'journeys of discoveries'. The two Englishmen were looking for the source of River Nile. This was to enable Europeans penetrate into the interior of Africa. Speke and Grant were the first Europeans ever to come to Buganda. They were well received by Kabaka Mutesa. They stayed for many months in Buganda as the guests of the Kabaka. They came to admire the Baganda and their customs. Later on when they wrote a book about their travels they gave a good description of the Baganda and their government. This was read with great interest in Europe and America. However, their suggestion that missionaries be sent to Buganda did not receive attention.

In 1875 another European came to Buganda. This was H M Stanley who was also warmly received by Kabaka Mutesa. We should remember that this was the period when Egypt under Khedive Ismail was trying to colonise the northern parts of Buganda. Kabaka Mutesa was desperately looking for anyone who could help him to stop the Egyptian threat to his country. Stanley convinced Kabaka Mutesa that he had answers to his problems. First of all Stanley told Mutesa that he was the agent of the British government. His country, he told Mutesa, was more powerful than Egypt. Of more interest to Mutesa, Stanley told him that the Arabs were not the only ones who had guns. The Europeans, Mutesa was told, manufactured more superior guns than the Arabs. Stanley also helped the Kabaka in his battles against his enemies. Therefore when Stanley suggested that Christian missionaries be allowed into Buganda, Mutesa agreed.

Stanley himself was very impressed with the Baganda and their Kabaka. Like Speke and Grant before him, he believed that the Baganda were the most civilised people in Central Africa. He also believed that Kabaka Mutesa was the most powerful of the East African kings. He sent a letter to England while he was still in Africa. In the letter, Stanley demanded that missionaries be sent to Buganda. He stated that with Mutesa's aid most of East Africa would soon become Christians.

Following Stanley's letter, the British Christian Missionary Society (C M S) sent a party of missionaries to Buganda. The first missionaries arrived in Buganda in June 1877. A second group of C M S missionaries arrived in February 1879. It was then the real missionary work started in Buganda. Their leader was Mr Mackay. They were Protestants.

One week after the arrival of the second Protestant Mission from England another group of white men arrived in Buganda. They were also missionaries, but this time from France. They were not Protestants but Catholics. They also asked Kabaka Mutesa to allow them to establish missionary work in Buganda. They were led by Father Lourdel. At first Mutesa was confused. This was especially when he realised that the Protestant missionaries did not welcome the Catholics. Each told Mutesa that the other was not a proper Christian denomination. Realising that the Catholics and the Protestants were opposed to each other, Mutesa welcomed the Catholics also. He allowed them to stay and also preach their religion. Why did Mutesa welcome both the Protestants and the Catholics?

From the beginning Mutesa knew what he wanted from the Europeans. He did not see any of them as bringers of new religion. He wanted them to give him military aid to stop the threat of Egypt

to his country. Whether they were Catholics or Protestants did not matter to him. This became clear when Mackay tried to convert him to Christianity. Mutesa listened to him but refused to be converted. However, when the Protestant missionaries suggested to Mutesa to send ambassadors to Queen Victoria of England he readily agreed. Three Baganda were chosen for the journey. They were Namakudde who was the leader, Katuluba and Magigi. They were accompanied by two missionaries named Felkin and Wilson. They left Buganda in early May 1879. They carried various presents from Kabaka Mutesa to Queen Victoria. These included: Ivory, leopard skin, Sandals, barkclothes, drinking straws and many other objects made in Buganda. They went through River Nile by boat until they arrived at Alexandria in Egypt. There they took an ocean going ship which took them to England. In England they were received by Queen Victoria and also visited many interesting places.

After the visit, the ambassadors of Kabaka Mutesa returned to Buganda. They returned by way of Zanzibar. They returned with the following gifts from Queen Victoria to Kabaka Mutesa: rifles, packages of ammunition, a sword, Fezzes, Iron boxes and some clothes. The envoy was received by the king. They told exciting stories about the wonderful things which they saw. They proved Stanley right when they showed that England was a very big country indeed. They even claimed that one province of England was bigger than Buganda, Bunyoro and Busoga combined. The Kabaka and members of his court were very happy and proud of the embassy sent to Queen Victoria. In fact, as we stated in chapter four, this was the time (1879-80) when Mutesa toyed with converting alternately to both Protestantism and Catholicism.

In the end, however, Mutesa did not join either Protestantism or Catholicism. Why was that? We have given some of the reasons in chapter four. Let us expand the reasons which we have already stated and add others here.

The Kabaka soon realised that the two Christian missionary groups would not get him any military and diplomatic help against Egypt. The Protestants refused to seek help for him from England. The Catholics also refused to get any military aid for the Kabaka from France. That was the main reason why he wanted the missionaries in the first place. They now proved useless to him. There was however another reason why Mutesa did not become a Christian. One of the conditions of the missionaries was that in order to be converted Mutesa had to put away all his wives and remain with only one. This was an impossible demand at that time. We have already seen that the marriages of the Kabaka were more political than personal. Thus

all the leading dignitaries of Buganda were opposed to the conversion of their king to Christianity. In addition, the rivalry between the Protestants and the Catholics also prevented Mutesa from converting to either of them. This is because some of his subjects had already become members of either body.

Mutesa, however, did not prevent any Muganda from belonging to any religion which he or she wanted. Many of the younger Baganda found the teachings of the missionaries attractive. Many of the royal pages, servants of chiefs and minor officials at the capital became Christians. In fact by the time Mutesa died the Christian pages had outnumbered their Muslim counterparts in the palace. It should be pointed out that the pages were youths from good families. They were usually presented to the Kabaka or the leading chiefs by the clan heads. It was from the pages that the future leaders of Buganda were drawn.

Some of the important young Christian converts during Mutesa's reign included: Apolo Kagawa who worked in Mutesa's treasury. He was converted to Protestantism. There was also Stanislaus Mugwanya who was an elephant hunter of Mutesa. He was converted to Catholicism. Both were to play important roles in the history of Buganda.

The Christian converts during Mutesa's reign set themselves apart from the pagans and the Muslims. This was also the same with the Muslims. The converts of Islam and Christianity refused to observe the prohibitions and taboos of their clans. For example they ate some of the meat which was forbidden by their clans. Because of this the followers of traditional religion called the Christians 'snake eaters' and 'drinkers of blood'. This was because they ignored the taboos of eating forbidden meat and the Catholics took the Holy Communion. By the time Mutesa died, the Muslims, the Protestants and Catholics were each organised into closely-knit separate groups. In fact they could be called religio-political parties.

Mutesa died in 1884. He is remembered as the greatest Kabaka who ever mounted the throne of Buganda. He was very wise, diplomatic and an expert in handling men and issues. He skilfully handled the divisions which were becoming apparent in the Baganda society during his reign. Nwanga, his son and successor was not as successful in doing so.

Kabaka Nwanga and the efforts at balancing Christian and Muslim interests in Buganda

Even before the great Kabaka Mutesa died, there were already signs

that Buganda was going to face a serious crisis. The introduction of Christianity and Islam was already changing the outlook of the Baganda. The converts of the two religions were already showing signs that they were not prepared to obey the customs and traditions of Buganda. It is true that the followers of the traditional religion of Buganda were still in the majority. But power, we already noted, was in the hands of the chiefs. The common Baganda were bound to follow their chiefs to war whenever they were called upon to do so. However, it was the chiefs who were divided into four groups by the time when Nwanga came to power. They were the Muslims, the Protestants, the Catholics and those who still followed the traditional religion. All these groups struggled with each other. Each of them wanted to influence the king so that the country would be ruled in its favour.

One of the most important challenges of Nwanga, therefore, was to balance the interests of the various groups. This was especially between the Christians and Muslims. The converts of the two religions, we said were no longer prepared to follow the traditional order of society. This included obeying the Kabaka without question. In addition, the new Kabaka, like the two converts, was also against the followers of the traditional religion. Nwanga failed to balance the interests of the two religions. He lacked the maturity and the experience of the great Mutesa. When he came to power in 1884 Nwanga was less than twenty years old. In addition, Nwanga was never given any training on how to rule the kingdom when he was a prince. This was not his fault. It was the practice in Buganda not to give any prince a responsible post in the administration of the country. This was to minimise attempts at getting themselves involved in a *coup d'état*. It was also meant to ensure the absolute powers of the Kabaka. As we have already noted in Book One this was also the practice in Dahomey. To Nwanga, this practice proved a great disadvantage. The problems which he faced were beyond the capacity of even an experienced king let alone an inexperienced one.

Nwanga, like his father, had no regards for the traditional religion of Buganda. However, Mutesa was very diplomatic in handling the priests and the Baganda chiefs who still followed the old religion. Nwanga when he came to power showed the old chiefs he was not with them. He made fun of the traditional religion. He humiliated the old chiefs. Ten of the leading chiefs were retired from the central government. Nwanga relied on the young chiefs and pages. Most of these were either Muslims or Christians. The king and the young converts belonged to the same generation. They were both hostile to the old customs. They also shared the same ambition for a great

Buganda in future. Nwanga, therefore, gave many of the young converts responsible positions in the government.

By this time, European scramble for Africa had begun. Nwanga soon began to fear the close association between the European missionaries and the Christian converts. He felt the Christian converts could be used in the European efforts to take over the country. In 1885 Nwanga learnt that a European Christian missionary was coming to Buganda through Busoga. He was named James Hannington, the first Anglican Bishop for East Africa. Busoga was regarded as the backdoor of Buganda. In Buganda tradition anyone who approached a house from the backdoor must either be a very close friend or an enemy. Certainly, Nwanga did not consider Bishop Hannington a friend. Not with his fear of European Christian missionaries. He therefore ordered Bishop Hannington to be murdered. This action turned many of the European missionaries into enemies of the young Kabaka. These European missionaries influenced their young Christian converts to oppose the Kabaka.

In June 1886 the first disagreement between Nwanga and the Christian converts took place. The latter accused Nwanga of practising sodomy. This made the Kabaka very angry. He ordered many of the Christian converts to be persecuted. By the end of 1886 over fifty of them were burnt alive. Many of them were former royal pages. Many converts went into hiding. There were others, however, who gave themselves up and bravely faced death. This was the same with the Muslim converts during their persecution by Kabaka Mutesa. Thus, Nwanga had offended both the followers of the old religion as well as the Christians.

Nwanga was more lenient towards the Muslim converts than their Christian counterparts. Nevertheless, the Muslim converts did not trust the Kabaka. Unlike Mutesa, Nwanga did not himself become a Muslim even for one day. They, therefore, did not regard him as one of them. It is true that unlike the Christians they were not persecuted. But a similar thing had happened to them during the rule of Mutesa. It is likely that it could have happened to them under Nwanga too. In addition, Nwanga did not spare the Muslim chiefs in this attempt to discard the old nobility. For example Muguluma and Kapalaga were publicly humiliated on the orders of the Kabaka. These were the most respected Muslim chiefs. To the Muslim converts, therefore, Nwanga was also against them.

While all these were going on many natural problems also arose. Immediately after Nwanga became the Kabaka there was an epidemic at Nabalago the capital city. Many people died. Nwanga was forced to choose a new capital. He went to Nkawo, known today as

Mengo. But Mengo was soon burnt down in a fire outbreak. Many people died. Much property was burnt. Kabaka Nwanga stayed temporarily at the house of the Katikiro. However, a few months later, in February 1886 precisely, the house was struck by thunder. This was soon followed by an eclipse of the moon. Everybody thought that was a bad omen.

Many other disasters occurred one after another. The house of the queen mother got burnt; Nwanga's merchant boat capsized with all his trade goods. And most of his battles against his neighbours were a disaster.

The Christian and the Muslim converts said that the disasters occurred because Nwanga was against them or their religions. The followers of the traditional religion also said the disasters were as a result of Nwanga no longer respecting the gods of Buganda. All the groups in Buganda were therefore not happy with the king.

From the end of 1886 Kabaka Nwanga was determined to have a group that was loyal to him. He however still did not like the old chiefs. He was therefore left with no alternative but to rely on the Muslim and Christian converts. These he began to promote. Many of the young converts were given positions in the central government. They were formed into new Bitongole or armed bands. The young men were also asked to form armed bands even in the provinces. In the capital all the Bitongole were under the Kabaka. Most of the guns which the Bitongole carried were owned by the king. In fact the royal armoury, or the place where guns and other fighting equipment were kept was located in the palace.

The peasants, Bakopi, soon realised that royal favour was with the young converts. They soon flocked to the young chiefs and left the old ones. In a short time the young chiefs and their followers became arrogant. They looted peoples property and killed those who refused to allow them to do so. Many of the old chiefs whose properties were looted and who were humiliated became very angry with Nwanga. They wanted his downfall.

The Buganda civil wars of 1888-1890

For some time it looked as if Nwanga had succeeded in balancing the Muslim and Christian interests. The leaders of his armed regiments (Bitongole) came from all the three groups. Among the leading chiefs, Nyonyintono was a Catholic, Kiwanuka Katege and Kapalaga were Muslims and Apolo Kaggwa was a Protestant. It looked as if the Kabaka had also succeeded in getting the three powerful groups

under his sole control. It is true that for sometime the three groups which were opposed to each other were brought together. However, instead of serving the Kabaka they united and deposed him from the throne.

We have already examined why the Christians – both Catholics and Protestants – as well as the Muslims were very suspicious of Nwanga. The Kabaka himself, although he promoted the young converts, he never trusted them. He was always afraid that one day they would unite and kill him. Thus both the king and the young converts were suspicious of one another. In 1888 Nwanga decided to rid Buganda of all foreigners (European missionaries and Arabs) and those Baganda whom they had converted to their religions. The plan was to trick them into canoes which will take them to some island in Lake Victoria. They were then to be left to die of hunger there. In this way Nwanga hoped to solve the problem of the Muslim and Christian interests.

From the outset the plan was doomed to fail. Nwanga had no means of getting all the foreigners and the young converts into the canoes. Secondly, the secret plot of the Kabaka was made known to the converts. When they were informed of the king's intention the converts were annoyed. It was unfortunate for Nwanga that the converts were in possession of most of the guns. They also had many followers. On 10th September 1888 the three parties – Catholics, Muslims and Protestants – combined and deposed the Kabaka. The young converts then appointed another prince as the Kabaka. The removal of Nwanga brought a new development into the history of Buganda. Formerly it was the king who appointed people to offices of the state. But after the revolt of 1888 it was the chiefs who divided the offices among themselves. Power was no longer in the hands of the Kabaka. The offices were divided among the three parties: Muslims, Catholics and Protestants. For example, Nyonyintono a Catholic chief became the Katikiro or the prime minister. Other offices were given to the Protestants and the Muslims.

However, there was a feeling among both Catholics and Protestant chiefs that the Muslims got more offices. The two Christian parties also felt that the new Kabaka favoured the Muslims. One Protestant chief called Antonio Dungu warned Kabaka Kiwewa Mutebi to stop showing more favour to the Muslims. If he refused to do so, Antonio Dungu said, the Christians would replace the Kabaka with a princess. This was a dangerous statement to make. The Baganda knew that England the country from where the Protestant European missionaries came had a Queen. It was also known that Nasiwa, one of the princesses of the kingdom, was a mistress of one of the leading

Protestant chiefs. His name was Saulo Mubanda. There was always a fear that the European missionaries would encourage Buganda to have a Queen.

The temporary alliance between the Muslim and Christian chiefs therefore broke down. Another civil war broke out in October 1888. This was only one month after Kabaka Nwanga was deposed. This time the Catholic and the Protestants joined together to fight the Muslims. They then asked Kabaka Mutebi to become a Muslim but he refused. He was deposed and another prince called Kalema who agreed to become a Muslim was made the Kabaka. In fact Kalema was the first true Muslim Kabaka of Buganda.

The Christian chiefs were persecuted. Many of them were killed. The Christian missionaries were expelled and their churches burnt down. Many of the Christian chiefs and their followers fled from Buganda. The Catholics went to Buddu, and the Protestants to Nkore or Ankole as it was later known.

In Buganda no revolt succeeded until it was headed by a prince of the royal blood. The Protestants and the Catholics united in order to fight the Muslims. Nwanga the ex-Kabaka was settling in Buddu since he was deposed. The Catholics and the Protestants chose Nwanga as the prince under whom they fought the Muslims. Many battles were fought between the Christians and the Muslims. Victory kept on alternating between them for some time. The Muslims were helped by the Arabs and the Sultan of Zanzibar. The Christians were helped by the European missionaries led by a missionary called Slokes. Finally in February 1890 the Christian combined parties decisively defeated the Muslims. The forces of the Muslims were scattered. The ex-Kabaka, Kalema fled to Bunyoro where he later died of smallpox. Once more Nwanga was made the Kabaka. The Christian chiefs took over the affairs of running Buganda. The success of the Christian chiefs helped in the colonisation of Buganda by the British within the same year.

The imperial British East Africa Company and the colonisation of Buganda

When Nwanga regained his throne in February 1890 all the Baganda were tired of fighting. Unfortunately for them this was the period of intensive European scramble for Africa. Before the end of the year Buganda was already a British colony. Let us examine how this came about.

In the years 1852-6 and again in 1858-64 a young British missionary called Dr David Livingstone explored many areas of the East and

Central Africa. He crossed Africa from Angola in the west to Mozambique in the east. It was during these journeys that David Livingstone discovered the horrors of East African slave trade. He embarked on an effort to enlighten Europe on these horrors.

Livingstone's major exploring journeys opened European interests in the interior of East and Central Africa. This was how Speke and Grant and later Stanley came to Buganda. As we have seen, they were soon followed by the European Missionaries.

From the middle of the nineteenth century many German explorers came also to East Africa. They too wanted Germany to colonise East Africa. In 1884, a German called Dr Karl Peters founded a society for German colonisation. He made Zanzibar his headquarters. From November 1884 Karl Peters and his associates went into the interior. They entered into treaties with any African chief who agreed to do so. In February 1885 the German government recognised the treaties between Peters and the African chiefs. He was granted a charter and the right to administer this territory. This area is now the mainland of Tanzania.

The activities of the Germans did not please the British. They realised that if care was not taken Germany would soon colonise the whole of East Africa. They then entered into an agreement with Germany to partition East Africa. This has been examined in chapter three. In 1886 Sir Williams Mackinson, the chairman of British India Steamship Company, set up a different company. It was called the British East Africa Company. Sir Williams offered to trade in the British sphere of Influence. He also promised that his company would administer the area on behalf of the British government. This was accepted by the British government. The company was given an imperial charter. It was thus re-named Imperial British East Africa Company (I B E A Co.). It was given the right to trade and administer the area between Mombassa and Lake Victoria.

In 1889, Mr J F Jackson, the agent of the company was sent into the interior to explore the area. He was, however, told not to enter Buganda. This was because of the civil war that was going on at that time. But in June 1889 Jackson received a letter from Kabaka Nwanga. Nwanga appealed to him for military aid against the Muslims. Jackson did not know what to do since he was instructed not to enter Buganda. In November 1889 Nwanga again wrote to Jackson to ask for military aid. He also agreed to enter into treaty with the Imperial British East Africa Company if Jackson helped him. When this second letter came Jackson was not in his camp.

In February 1890 Dr Karl Peters came upon Jackson's camp. He entered his tent and read Nwanga's letter. Of course by this time

Nwanga had finally defeated Kalema and the Muslim party and had already regained his throne. Karl Peters did not know that. He was determined to prevent the British from colonising Buganda. He therefore rushed to Buganda. When he met Nwanga he offered to enter into a treaty with him. He told Nwanga it was better to enter into treaty with all European companies than with the IBEA Co alone. Nwanga accepted the treaty.

When Nwanga asked for help from Jackson he was still fighting the Muslim party. But when he signed the treaty with Dr Karl Peters he had already defeated his enemies and regained the throne. In addition, we have seen that as far back as 1885 Nwanga had been concerned with European imperialism. Why then did he sign a treaty with Dr Karl Peters? To start with, Nwanga found that the treaty with Dr Peters was fair. It did not demand that Nwanga become the vassal of his company or that of Germany. Secondly, Nwanga was still afraid of his position. He did not trust the Christian converts although they helped him to regain the throne. He knew that they could still remove him from the throne. On the other hand although the Muslims were defeated they were not completely wiped out. They could still recover again and fight him. If that were to happen he was not too sure the Christians would help him again. After all, the Christians and the Muslims combined to drive him away in the first place.

The treaty between Karl Peters and Nwanga was encouraged by the Catholic missionaries. These were French and so were not in favour of Buganda falling to the British. They felt that the British will side with the Protestants. They were to be proved right. On the other hand the Protestant missionaries were against the signing of the treaty. They on their part wanted Britain to colonise Buganda.

While Karl Peters was in Buganda he learnt that Jackson too was on his way. Peters quickly left Buganda before Jackson arrived. When the latter arrived he too offered a treaty of protection on behalf of his company. Nwanga on the advice of the Catholic missionaries refused to sign it. However, on 1 July 1890 an agreement was signed between Britain and Germany. This was known as Heligoland Treaty. In it Buganda became a British sphere of influence. In return Britain agreed that Heligoland should belong to Germany. Heligoland was an island in the North Sea. This meant that the treaty which Nwanga signed with Karl Peters was now useless.

Buganda was now firmly under the British. It was decided that Captain Lugard be sent as an official representative of the Imperial British East Africa Company. Lugard at the time was busy making treaties in Kikuyuland (present day Kenya). Lugard was asked to

hurry to Buganda. He was asked to secure the control of Buganda for the company. He was also instructed to strengthen the position of the Protestant party. Lugard arrived Kampala on 18 December 1890. He started to negotiate with Nwanga. This proved more difficult than the company had thought. Nwanga and the Catholic party were at first against signing the treaty. It was with threats of using force that made Nwanga and the Catholics to agree. Soon after signing the treaty Lugard helped to defeat the Muslims who attacked Buganda again. This proved to Nwanga and the Catholics that the protection agreed on by the company was going to be useful.

It was not long before things deteriorated again. The Catholics and the Protestants disagreed again. They wanted to fight each other. To make matters worse Lugard left Buganda soon after signing the treaty. He wanted to extend the territory under the company. Thus on 1 July 1891 he signed a treaty with Nkore (Ankole). He then marched to Toro where he put a puppet named Kasagama on the throne. He also signed a treaty of protection with Toro. Lugard finally recruited some 300 Sudanese troops who came with him to Kampala. They arrived in December 1891.

When he returned to Kampala Lugard found that the Catholics and the Protestants were ready to fight one another. He also found instructions ordering him to withdraw from Buganda. His company was in financial difficulties. They could no longer maintain him and his troops. Lugard was very ambitious. He was not ready to abandon the work which he started. Secondly, once he withdrew, his treaties with Toro and Ankole would become useless. Thirdly, Lugard felt that if he withdrew, the Protestants whom he wanted to protect would be in trouble. The Catholics and Nwanga would unite with other forces to defeat them. The Muslims and other European powers were also ready to help Nwanga.

Lugard did not leave Buganda. The agent of the company at the Coast continued to provide him with arms and other supplies while the British Christian Missionary Society managed to raise enough funds to enable him to stay in Buganda up to the end of 1892.

In January 1892 Lugard contributed to the crisis in Buganda which had later turned into a war. A Catholic had shot and killed a Protestant. Nwanga tried the Catholic and found him not guilty. He therefore ordered him to be freed. Lugard demanded that the man be handed over to him. He wanted to re-try him and execute him. Nwanga saw this as questioning his authority as the Kabaka. So, he naturally refused. Lugard decided to use force. He gave guns to the Protestants. He also had his Sudanese soldiers and two maxim guns. So another war broke out. Lugard and his soldiers fought on the side

of the Protestants. Nwanga and the Catholics were easily defeated. Nwanga and most of his followers fled to Buddu. When Lugard found he could not control Buganda without the Kabaka, Lugard persuaded Nwanga to return to the capital. He came back to Kampala on 30 March 1892. Nwanga was forced to sign a new treaty, agreeing to formally recognise the authority of the Imperial Company. For the first time he was forced to fly the company flag in front of his palace.

The new treaty also divided the offices of the state among the religio-political parties. The Catholics were given the Buddu Province. Ssesse islands were divided between the Catholics and the Protestants. The Muslims were given the small provinces of Busujju, Gomba and Butambala. The rest provinces were given to the Protestants.

After satisfying himself that Buganda was secured, Lugard left the country. In November, 1892 a British commissioner was appointed for Buganda. He was Sir Gerard Portel. He arrived in Buganda in March 1893. He soon hoisted the Union Jack at Kampala on 1 April 1893. Finally Nwanga was forced to sign yet another treaty on the 29 May 1893. This time he accepted that his country had become a British protectorate. He also agreed that henceforth the British officers had the sole right of levying taxes. They also had the right to spend the public money in Buganda. From this time onwards Buganda became to all purposes a British colony.

The role of Buganda in the British occupation of Uganda

The Baganda were used by the British in colonising Uganda. We have seen that the European missionaries helped in converting the young Baganda to their religion. The young Baganda, once converted, were determined to change the traditional Buganda. There was conflict between the traditional authority headed by the Kabaka and the new converts. Finally the Kabaka, the traditional chiefs and the Muslims were defeated. The Christian converts gained the final victory. This we said contributed a lot to the colonisation of Buganda.

The Christian missionaries and their Baganda converts welcomed British colonisation of Buganda. Between 1894 and 1899 the Baganda Christians helped the British against Bunyoro. After it was defeated a large part of Bunyoro territory was transferred to Buganda. In 1889 Apolo Kagga the leader of the Protestants in Buganda was appointed the Katikiro or prime minister. He was to remain in his

post for thirty-seven years. He supported most of the British policies in Uganda. In fact when Nwanga revolted in 1897 the Buganda Christian chiefs allied with the British against their own Kabaka. Nwanga was deposed. His infant son Daudi Chwa was named his successor.

Also, the Baganda helped the British in the conquest of other areas which now form modern Uganda. We have already seen the case of Bunyoro. A prince of Buganda called Semai Lwakireenzi Kakungulu conquered and administered the eastern and northeastern Uganda for the British. He established provinces, sub-provinces and districts all over the area. This was the same as it was in Buganda. There were many other Baganda who were so used by the British.

Wherever the British went in Uganda they took the Baganda with them. These were appointed as subordinate administrators. The Baganda also helped the spread of Christianity and Islam to the other parts of Uganda. Many Buganda thus got job opportunities outside Buganda. In fact their association with the British enhanced the status of the Baganda above all their neighbours. It was only in the 1920s that the British started to withdraw the Baganda as their agents in Uganda. But by then colonialism was well established in Uganda.

Questions

1. Mutesa did not become a Christian because
 - A. he was still a firm believer in the traditional religion
 - B. he was already a Muslim
 - C. the Christian missionaries made many demands before conversion which the Kabaka found difficult to fulfil
 - D. the Christians he realised would soon take over his land if he accepted to be converted
 - E. Mutesa was afraid of losing the friendship and support of the Sultan of Zanzibar and the Muslim Arabs.
2. Nwanga ordered the assassination of Bishop Hannington because
 - A. he was coming to colonise Buganda
 - B. Nwanga hated all white men
 - C. Bishop Hannington did not first seek Nwanga's permission before coming to Buganda
 - D. Bishop Hannington approached Buganda from

E Busoga which was the traditional backdoor to Buganda Nwanga had started to become suspicious of the European Christian missionaries and their Baganda converts

3. Lugard refused to leave Buganda as instructed by his employers because
 - A. he was afraid the Muslims would re-conquer Buganda again and depose Nwanga
 - B. the Catholics and the Protestants would fight each other again
 - C. all his personal efforts may be rendered useless if another European power occupied Buganda
 - D. Nwanga would renounce all the treaties entered into with the Company
 - E. he would never get another chance of coming back to Buganda
4. List all the early Europeans who came to Buganda during the rule of Mutesa I. Why did they come?
5. Why did Mutesa welcome the European missionaries?
6. Why did Kabaka Nwanga fail to balance the Christian and Muslim interests in Buganda?
7. What led to the civil wars between 1888 and 1890?
8. Discuss the role of the Imperial British East Africa Company in colonising Buganda.
9. Discuss how Lugard precipitated a fight between him and the Protestants on one side and Nwanga and the Catholics on the other.
10. What was the role of the Baganda in the British colonisation of Uganda?

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Chapter Six

Ethiopia before the rise of Emperor Theodore to power

Introduction

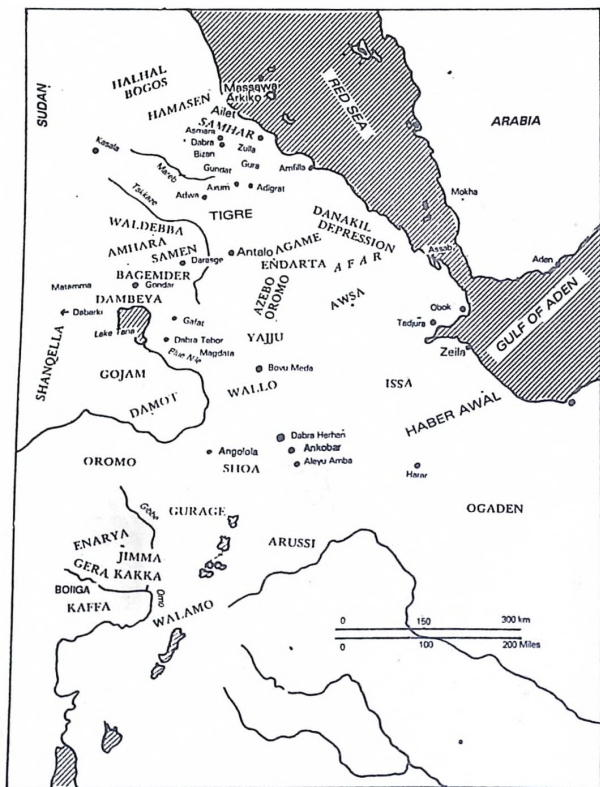
Ethiopia was formerly called Abyssinia. According to a legend, the word Abyssinia was derived from *Ethiop* (or *Itopis* or *Aethopis*). This was the Ethiopian name for Cush. According to a Biblical tradition, Cush was the son of Ham who in turn was the son of Noah. Thus, Cush or Ethiop was the hero-founder of Ethiopia. This is just as Oduduwa is claimed to be the founder of the Yorubas or Kintu the founder of the Baganda. We have already commented on the reliability of these foundation stories while discussing the Baganda.

Ethiopia is very remarkable in the history of Africa. It is one of the only two African countries which had never been colonised by an outside power. The other country is Liberia whose history we learnt in Book One. The headquarters of the Organisation of African Unity (O.A.U.) has been located in Addis Ababa since its formation in 1963. Addis Ababa is the present capital of Ethiopia. It should be pointed out, however, that Ethiopia had never enjoyed peace and stability for any length of time. There was always conflicts caused by civil wars, struggles for power and foreign invasions. Thus, throughout the history of the country the major preoccupation of most rulers have been how to achieve peace and unity.

In this chapter, we shall briefly outline the ecology of the country. We shall also give a brief history of the country and her peoples before the rise of Emperor Theodore to power.

The ecology of Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the countries whose histories have been heavily influenced by their geography. The country is composed of lowlands, highlands, the Rift Valley, deep gorges and gullies. These made communications between one region and the other very dif-



Ethiopia in the early nineteenth century

difficult. The different geographical areas also gave the people strong regional identities. All these made national unity and integration difficult. The lowlands of Ethiopia are known as *Qwolla*. These include all the valleys and plains whose height above sea level are below 1524 metres. These include the plains of Eritrea or Samhar; the Danakil and Afar depressions as well as the Awsa valley. All these are situated between the highlands and the Red Sea. In the eastern parts of the country there are the plains of Harar and the lower slopes of Ogaden. In the southern parts of the country are the Sidamo-Borana plains.

The temperature of the Qwolla areas is very hot. The area is generally dry because of low annual rainfall. The vegetation ranges from that of the Sahel savannah to that of the desert. The Qwolla is inhabited largely by nomads who herd sheep, goats and some camels.

The Ethiopian highlands rise abruptly from the plains. The people recognise two types of highlands. These are the intermediary highlands which range from 1524 to 2467 metres above the sea level. They are called *Woina Dega*. And those that are generally higher than 2467 metres above sea level. They are called *Dega*. The highlands are generally fertile and well-watered. The temperature is cooler there than in the plains. The annual rainfall is also higher and the vegetation more luxurious than those of the plains. Tendering of domestic animals like goats and sheep is one of the major occupations. The people also cultivate a great variety of cereals, coffee and cotton. This is the most productive part of the country. It is also the most populated.

The highlands are however broken and mountainous in many parts. Several rivers rise in the highlands and flow down into the plains. They create deep valleys, gorges and gullies. These we already noted made travelling very difficult. The Abai or Blue Nile and Tekkeze or Atbara river all rose from the Ethiopian highlands. They formed important branches of the Nile which we saw was the life sustainer of Egypt. In the eleventh century a belief grew among the Egyptians that the Ethiopian Emperor could cause famine in their land if he wished. All he had to do, they believed, was divert the waters of the Nile.

Society, economy and government up to 1855

The original inhabitants of Ethiopia are said to have been dark-skinned. Over the centuries, however, these had been absorbed by successive waves of light-skinned immigrants who came from across

the first time. The Bilem and the Agaw are said to be the descendants of the earlier immigrants who came from the area where the Republic of Yemen is located today. The most important of these groups were the Habashat and Agawut. They settled on the plateau of Tigre from where they spread to other areas of the Ethiopian highlands. The inter-mixing of these latter immigrants and the earlier ones produced the so-called Semetic speaking peoples of Ethiopia. The Agaw and most of the Semetic speaking peoples are located on the Ethiopian highlands. Amharic is spoken in the provinces of Amhara, Goggam, and Shoa. It is the most widely spoken language in Ethiopia. Tigrinya is spoken in Tigre, Eretrea and the island of Massawa. Guraje is spoken in the Guraje province while Adare is spoken in Harar.

In the northern desert plains the most important group is the Afar speaking peoples. They have some distant relations with the Somali who are found in the eastern lowlands. The Oromo, known as Galla in the old history books, are today concentrated in the southwest of the kingdom. They are today the most numerous group in Ethiopia. In addition there are also the Falasha or Ethiopian Jews, the Sidamo, the Arabs and several other minority groups in the country.

Religious beliefs

The earliest inhabitants like the Bilem and the Agaw worship natural objects such as water, trees, stones and certain idols. Later immigrants from South Arabia introduced the worship of the Sun, Moon, the Star and Venus. Temples were built for the heavenly bodies. Idols were built in stone, gold, silver and bronze and dedicated to these gods. The South Arabian immigrants also introduced the art of writing in Ethiopia. This was the same with the form of writing which we saw in ancient Egypt. Thus, like the latter, which we mentioned in Book One, Ethiopia also had a written language hundreds of years before Jesus was born.

In all the states south of the Sahara which we have so far examined, Christianity was introduced by European missionaries. This was mainly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ethiopia, however, was one of the earliest Christian kingdoms not only in Africa but in the whole world. Christianity was introduced into Ethiopia in the third century A.D. Emperor Ezana who came to power in A.D. 330 was the first Christian ruler of the country. The religion was spread widely, especially among the Tigraya-Amhara speaking peoples of the highlands. It has become the cornerstone of

their culture. Ethiopia adopted the practices of the Orthodox Coptic Church of Egypt. This is why the Abuna, or Bishop in Ethiopia was always an Egyptian Copt. The first Abuna is said to have been Frumentis who was appointed between A.D. 341 and 346. The Ethiopian Church has its own literatures in Geez. This was a written language adopted from Aguezat. Between the fifth and seventh century A.D. the Bible and many Christian holy books were translated into Geez. The Ethiopian Church also has its own peculiar public worship. This is in form of ceremonial chanting accompanied by sistra, drums and slow sacred dance.

Over the centuries many beautiful churches as well as monasteries were built all over the country. Many of the monasteries were built on inaccessible plateaus. This was especially the case of the famous monastery of Debra-Dumo in the neighbourhood of Aksum, the ancient capital. Even today to get to this monastery, one has to go up a difficult cliff of 16 metres or more by means of a rope.

Christianity was not the only religion in Ethiopia. Many of the descendants of the earlier peoples, especially the Agaw and the Sidamo still adhere to their old religions. Many of the Oromo also still have their traditional religions. The Fajasha or Ethiopian Jews practised their own form of Judaism. They also possessed their own literature in Geez. There had been several clashes between the emperors and these peoples. The emperors who saw themselves as champions of Christianity wanted to convert them. They, however, resisted. Christianity in Ethiopia, however, received its most serious challenges from Islam. Ironically as we shall see further below, Ethiopia gave protection to the earliest persecuted Muslims. Today the Eretrean region and other coastal plains are predominantly Islamic. So are the southern provinces occupied by the Oromo. Even on the plateaus, the heartland of Christianity, there are a sizeable number of Muslim minorities there.

The economy of Ethiopia up to 1855

We have already discussed some of the agricultural products of Ethiopia while outlining the ecology. In addition, most of Ethiopia's rock salt was obtained from the Afar or Danakil depression. The salt was called *amole*. It was used in cooking. It was also used as a currency. In the Afar region, the Awsa valley was the only fertile area. It produced crops which supplied the needs of the area as well as those of the visiting nomads. The southwest of the country was a fertile and woodland area. Located there was the kingdom of Kaffa from where civet, ivory, slaves and coffee were obtained.

Ethiopia had been trading with Egypt and Arabia since ancient times. She used to export gold, ostrich feathers, aromatic gum and even live animals to Egypt. In the sixteenth century, Ethiopia was very prosperous. She sent large caravans of goods to the Nile valley and Egypt. At the same time boats from Mokha and Jedda in Arabia were also visiting Ethiopia. They brought European and Indian products. These included clothes, beads, metals and metal products and machlocks. The latter is some kind of gun. The Arabian boats carried away the products of Ethiopia. These included gold, ivory, musk, skins, some agricultural products and slaves.

The slaves from Ethiopia were in great demand in the Muslim world. The men were valued for their courage, honesty and loyalty. Bilal, the famous Muezzin of Prophet Muhammed was originally an Ethiopian slave. Young Ethiopian women slaves were also in great demand. They became concubines and wives of their owners. By the nineteenth century it is said that there were only a few Arabs in the towns of Hijaz that did not have some Ethiopian blood in their veins.

It should be noted, however, that Semitic speaking Ethiopians were never enslaved. This was the same whether they were Christians or Muslims. The slaves were captured from the southern peoples: the Oromo, Sidama and Shanqalla. We noted that the Ashanti, the Aja and the Baganda also had laws that forbade the enslaving of their own peoples.

In the earlier period most of the external trade of Ethiopia went through the province of Tigre. Because of this, the governors of the province became very rich. This was from the tolls and tributes which they collected from the traders. Later, however, Shoa province came to control the trade with the rich area of the south. Most of the goods which Ethiopia exported came from there. In the nineteenth century, Shoa began to expand to the fertile lands in the south and in the east. This enabled her to attract the rich caravans. In fact by the rule of Ras Sahle Salassie (1812-1846) the governor of the province, Shoa was the richest and the most powerful province in Ethiopia. The Muslim city-state of Harar also had flourishing trade since the ancient times. From the sixteenth century up to the second half of the nineteenth century it was a centre of caravan trade between the outside world and the provinces of Shoa, Aussa, Gurage and Ogaden.

Up to the beginning of the eighteenth century, the ancient port of Zeila together with Massawa handled the export and imports of Ethiopia. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century the port of Zeila declined. Its place was taken over by the port of Tajura.

Much of Ethiopian trade was carried on by barter. However, in the most important trading centres the Maria thlar was accepted.

Maria thlar was a silver coin originally struck by Austria. For smaller change, people used pieces of cloth, black pepper, beads and salt money or amole. The latter was accepted as money all over Ethiopia up to the second half of the nineteenth century. In addition Ethiopian monarchs had also been striking their own coins since ancient times.

Government and society

Ethiopia was ruled by monarchs for centuries. The ruler was called *Neguse Negest* which literally means 'king of kings'. It also means emperor. Haile Selassie who was deposed during the 1974 revolution is claimed to have been the 225th *Neguse Negest*. Menelik I, the first emperor is said to have been the son of Queen Sheba (Bilkis of the Muslim traditions) and the Biblical King Solomon (Prophet Sulayman of the Muslims). All the succeeding emperors of Ethiopia are claimed to be the descendants of Solomon and Sheba. The only exceptions were the emperors of the Zagwe dynasty who ruled Ethiopia in the twelfth century.

The emperor was the symbol of unity in Ethiopia. He was the chief executive of the state. He was the commander in chief of his own army. He personally led his troops into battle against his enemies. He was the highest court of appeal in the empire. People expected protection, justice and sustenance from him. In theory the emperor had the powers of giving land and other forms of patronage. He also had the powers of withdrawing them. The emperor had a large group of noblemen, trusted loyalists and church dignitaries who helped him in ruling the empire. Many of them belonged to the royal family itself. It was from these groups that the *Rasas*, the *Tshahafe Tezaz* (the imperial secretary), the *Afa-Negus* (the Chief Justice) the *Dejazmach* (army commander) and several other officers of the state were appointed. In theory they all remained in office at the pleasure of the emperor.

Royal women played a very active part in the affairs of the state. In fact Empress Helena and Empress Mentwab, at different periods, acted as regents of the state. The former was the wife of Emperor Na'od (1495-1508) and the latter the wife of Emperor Bakaffa (1721-30). They sent and received ambassadors, built many royal palaces and suppressed rebellions. We shall discuss other remarkable women in the succeeding chapters.

In the seventeenth century, Emperor Fasilades (1632-67) built a new capital at Gondar. This was in the province of Begendar in the region of Tigre. Very soon Gondar became a large and prosperous

city. Fasilades and his successors built schools for studying grammar, law, theology and religious music. They also built many beautiful palaces and churches. Gondar and its neighbourhood came to contain about 20 palaces and 30 churches. The kings of Ethiopia, as we have already noted, greatly identified themselves with Christianity. They gave land to churches, monasteries and priests. They undertook expeditions against non-Christians. In fact Ethiopian emperors were regarded as champions of Christianity. This was not only recognised in Ethiopia but also in Europe and many other parts of the world.

The death of an emperor was usually accompanied by succession disputes. To minimise these, a number of measures were undertaken. Ethiopia had always had a crown prince or heir apparent. In addition once the emperor was selected, all others who were likely to challenge him were arrested. They were taken to fortified monasteries and kept permanently there. All these measures, however, did not prevent succession disputes. Many rulers did not reign peacefully. Some like Yasu the Great (1682-1706) were forced to abdicate. Others were assassinated or poisoned.

Once selected, the emperor underwent an elaborate coronation ceremony. Most of these coronation ceremonies took place at Aksum. The latter, even when it stopped being the seat of the emperors, nevertheless, continued to be the sacred capital of the state. The emperor elect was also supposed to be anointed by the Abuna. The emperor gave fiefs and governorships to army commanders, office holders and court favourites. Before the 'era of judges', which we shall examine further below, giving out fiefs were not hereditary. They were held at the emperor's pleasure.

By the time of Emperor Zera Yaqob (1438-1468) the feudal system in Ethiopia had been laid. The central government was more formally established. Next to the Neguse Negest (king of kings) was the Ras who was usually a regional governor in say, Tigre, Amhara or Shoa. Below them were those Dejazmachs (literally 'warrior of the door'), or army commanders who were also provincial governors. Each province was divided into districts or *Negarits*. The latter was divided into a number of parishes, each under a *Chiqa shum*.

Each governor was responsible for law and order in his territory. He had the power of life and death over the population under him. He was the highest judicial and executive authority in his territory. The governor was responsible for the collection of taxes in his provinces. He paid these into the imperial treasury. Whenever he was called upon, the governor was bound to bring his army to fight for the emperor.

Each *Negarits* or district head ruled on behalf of his governor. He

collected tributes on behalf of the governor. He retained some portion for his use and gave the rest to the governor. The governors usually appointed their ex-soldiers or courtiers as *chiqa shum* or parish chief. The army of each *Dejazmach* was made up of infantry and cavalry. The soldiers provided their own armament and horses. But each lord had select troops. Those were armed with firearms and given generous pay by their masters. The size of an army under a governor depended on his financial means. It also depended on the extent of his territory.

Ethiopia and the outside world before 1855

We have already noted that immigrants from Southern Arabia contributed to the emergence of Ethiopia. From then on, cultural, ethnic, economic and political relations existed between the two areas. In about 500 A.D. Ethiopia conquered and colonised Southern Arabia. The emperor sent a man named *Abraha* to be his viceroy there. In about 540 A.D. *Abraha* sent his army to invade the city of Mecca. The major aim of the invasion was to destroy the shrine of the *Ka'ba*. This was in order to stop pilgrims going there from all over Arabia. *Abraha* wanted the pilgrims to, instead, go to *Sanaa*, his headquarters which was located in modern Yemen. At that time, the *Ka'ba* was a pagan shrine. The invasion failed to take Mecca.

Less than one hundred years after the invasion of Mecca by the forces of Ethiopia, Islam emerged there. At first, relations between Ethiopia and the young religion was cordial. In 615 A.D. Prophet Muhammed ordered a number of Muslims to seek refuge in Ethiopia. This was in order to escape the persecution of the pagan Quraish who were vehemently opposed to Islam. The Muslims were welcomed and well-treated by the Ethiopian Emperor. However, the good relations soon deteriorated. In the years 630, 640 and 702, Ethiopia carried a number of attacks against the coastal towns of Southern Arabia. The Muslims took the offensive. The Ethiopian ports were raided. The ports of *Massawa* and *Dahlak* were captured. Other ports like *Adulis* were sacked and burnt. Ethiopia declined. The conflicts between Ethiopia and the Muslims were to last for more than one thousand years.

In the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire occupied the Red Sea Basin. The *Pasha* of *Jidda* in modern Saudi Arabia was supposed to rule the whole of Ethiopian coastland. The Ottomans, however, became weak after the sixteenth century.

We noted that Ethiopia had close commercial and cultural relations with Egypt since the days of the Pharaohs. This relationship was also to continue into the modern period. We have already seen

that there was a very close religious link between Egypt and Ethiopia. Up to 1948, the Abuna in Ethiopia was an Egyptian. Even after that period, the Abuna had to be consecrated by the head of the Coptic Church in Egypt. In 1209, Emperor Lalibella of Ethiopia sent an embassy to Egypt. The gifts which he sent to Cairo included live animals like giraffe, lion, elephant and zebra. This was the time when workmen from Egypt helped Emperor Lalibella in building some of the churches in Ethiopia. During the rule of Emperor Yeshak (1414-29) an Egyptian Mamluk did much to reform the Ethiopian army. In the sixteenth century, large caravans of merchandise were exchanged between Ethiopia on one side and Egypt and the Nile Valley on the other.

During Muhammad Ali's rule of Egypt (1811-47) the relations between the two countries again deteriorated. He captured the port of Massawa. He later brought the whole area along the Red Sea coast under the rule of Egypt. Some writers even claim that Muhammad Ali wanted to conquer the whole of Ethiopia. He was only prevented from doing so, they say, by the British authorities. It, however, appears that all that Muhammad Ali wanted was to get slaves and cattle. We have already seen in Book One that these were the reasons which led him to send an army into the Sudan. These commodities Muhammad Ali got by attacking the border areas of Ethiopia.

We also noted that Ethiopia declined after clashes with Muslim powers in the eighteenth century A.D. From this time onwards, a number of legends began to be told of Ethiopia. One of these was the legend of one Prester John who would one day rule Christian Ethiopia. It was said that he would conquer and destroy Mecca and deliver the world from Islam. This legend of Prester John got to western Europe in about 1665. It was the period when there were intensive conflicts between Christian western Europe and the Muslims over Palestine. These conflicts are known in European books as the Crusades. It was then rumoured that there existed a Christian emperor who possessed immense wisdom and power. He was claimed to have been ruling over seventy-two kings. His name was Prester John.

From then on, western Europeans intensified their search for the legendary Prester John. They wanted an ally with whom they could jointly attack the Muslims. The Pope and the Kings of Portugal were in the fore-front in this endeavour. In 1450, King Alfonso of Aragon sent an embassy to Emperor Zera Yaqob (1434-1468) asking for the establishment of friendly relations including marriage. This embassy never succeeded in reaching Ethiopia. Many others suffered similar fate. Empress Helena, we noted, exchanged ambassadors

with Don Emmanuel, King of Portugal. Finally, a Portuguese embassy managed to reach Gondar, the capital and succeeded in returning back to Europe. Canon Alvarez, the leader of the embassy published the results of their journey in 1540. It was titled *An Authentic Report on the Lands of Prester John*. It was translated into all the major European languages. People read it very widely.

In the meantime, Muslims had almost taken over Ethiopia. The fiercest challenge came from Imam Ahmad al-Ghazi popularly known as Gran. He declared a *Jihad* against Ethiopia. By 1528, he had conquered a large area of the country. All forces sent against him by Emperor Lebna-Dengal (1508-40) were defeated. At the end, the emperor solicited for military aid from Portugal. In 1541, the Portuguese volunteers arrived. With their help, the Ethiopian emperor was able to defeat Gran. In 1557, however, the Jesuits arrived and a few years later, they converted Emperor Susenyos (1608-32) to Roman Catholic. Under the influence of the Jesuits, Susenyos attempted to force the people of Ethiopia to convert to Roman Catholicism. Many who refused were burnt on the stakes or hanged. Some had their tongues cut off. The people revolted in 1621 and there followed a civil war. Although the emperor's party won the battle about 8000 of the rebels were killed. This so moved the emperor that he abdicated in favour of his son Fasilades (1632-67). Catholicism was abandoned. People were asked to go back to the Coptic Church.

As soon as he came to power, Fasilades drove away the Jesuits from his court. Some of them went to India. Those who remained in Ethiopia were hunted and killed. In fact Fasilades even entered into friendly agreements with the Muslim rulers of Yemen, Swakin and Massawa. Part of the agreements was to prevent any European missionary from passing through their territories on their way to Ethiopia. It was only in the reign of Yasu the Great (1682-1706) that relations between Ethiopia and western Europe were re-established. In 1698, for example, Yasu received an embassy from King Louis XIV of France.

It was, however, the threat posed by the forces of Muhammad Ali of Egypt which led Ethiopia to ask for military help from Europe. From then on, missions after missions were sent to the various European powers soliciting for military aid. In 1841, the French King sent small arms to Ethiopia. Some French artisans also came to help Ethiopia in producing war materials.

The era of the judges: 1769-1855

The period 1769-1855 is known in Ethiopian history as *Zamana*

3. **Amole**
- A. was some form of money used in pre-nineteenth century Ethiopia
 - B. was some type of food used by those who engaged in long-distance travels
 - C. was the name of some plant used in making salt
 - D. was the name of the rock salt used in cooking as well as money in pre-twentieth century Ethiopia
 - E. was the name given to people who engaged in selling salt
4. The term **Zamana Masafint** is used by Ethiopians to refer to
- A. the period 1820-1855 when there was no king in Ethiopia
 - B. the period 1769-1855 when the emperor was a puppet in the hands of the provincial lords
 - C. the period when the Bible says 'There was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his eyes'
 - D. the period before 1750 when the Neguse Negest had very little power in ruling the country
 - E. the period when Gondar the capital was at the highest peak of its development
5. Write short notes on the following:
- i) Rasa
 - ii) The Abuna
 - iii) Falasha
 - iv) Massawa
 - v) Prester John
6. What is remarkable about Ethiopia in the history of Africa?
7. Discuss the main religious beliefs of the Ethiopian peoples.
8. How did Ethiopia obtain the slaves which it exported? Why were the slaves from Ethiopia in great demand in the Muslim world?
9. Discuss the origins and powers of the Neguse Negest up to 1855.
10. Outline the external relations of Ethiopia before 1855.

Further reading

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Chapter Seven

Emperor Theodore II and his reformist policies in an attempt to unify the country under the monarchy: 1855-1868

Introduction

Towards the end of the last chapter, we briefly examined the *Zamana Masafint* or 'the era of the judges'. We saw that things were so bad Ethiopians were fervently hoping for the coming of the prophesied Theodore. This chapter is on one who believed that he was the prophesied Theodore. The Ethiopians at the beginning of his reign also thought he was the Theodore who was prophesied to usher in the Golden Period in the country. Finally many of the younger generation of Ethiopians today believe that Theodore was the pioneer of modern Ethiopian unity. Ethiopian poets, novel writers, dramatists and scholars agree that he was one of the greatest figures in Ethiopian history.

Our aim in this chapter is to present the background and early life of Theodore II. We shall then discuss his rise to power; outline his political and other reforms, and finally examine the main problems that contributed to his tragic death.

Background and early life of Theodore

The actual name of Theodore was Kassa. It was only at the time of his coronation as emperor that he adopted the throne name Theodore – or Tewodros, as it is known among Ethiopians. Kassa was born around 1820 in the small western province of Qwarra. His father, Haylu Welde Giyorgis was the chief of Qwarra. The controversy on Kassa's connection to the royal Solomonic dynasty has still not been resolved. Many writers feel that Kassa was not a member of the royal dynasty but a usurper of the throne. Some however feel that his

ancestors were members of the royal blood. Whatever the truth Kassa did not become emperor because of his connection to the royal house. He fought his way and seized the throne by force.

Haylu Giyorgis, Kassa's father, died when Kassa was still a child. His father's relatives took away all his property and left Attitegeb, Kassa's mother, a very poor widow. In fact she had to hawk *Koso* on the streets of Gondar in order to make a living. *Koso* was the traditional Ethiopian medicine for tape-worms. Attitegeb, however, was determined to send Kassa, her only son to school. She originally wanted him to become a monk. She therefore sent him to a convent school near Lake Tana. He was later transferred to another convent school in Qwarra where he completed his education. Kassa was well-educated. He learnt to read and write in Geez and Amharic. He mastered the history, law and traditions of Ethiopia. He was also very knowledgeable in the Bible and other Holy scriptures. Later he came to acquire a good knowledge of both ancient and modern European history. He also studied European literature especially the writings of William Shakespeare.

Kassa did not become a monk as his mother wished. He, instead, became a soldier after leaving school at the age of sixteen. He served his brother Kinfu who became the governor of Qwarra. Kassa came to be well-trained in military tactics. He acquired shooting and horsemanship skills. He is said to have been very strong physically. He was also able to endure pain and hardship for a long time.

Kassa's rise to power: 1840-1855

From about 1830 up to the time when Kassa rose to power, there were three nobles who, between them, controlled the affairs of Ethiopia. The first was Dejazmach Wube who was the regional governor of Tigre, Siemen, Wolkait and Wogere. The second was Negus (i.e. 'king') Sahle Salassie, the regional governor of Shoa. The third was Ras Ali who was the Oromo governor of Begamder and Amhara. As the Betwad or 'chief vizier', Ras Ali was also the guardian of the empress when her husband Yohannis III became the emperor. This made Ras Ali the most powerful individual in the empire. The other provincial governors kept on changing their loyalties from one strong and powerful individual to the other.

Kassa's first ambition was to become the governor of Qwarra. When that was denied him, he escaped to the lowlands and became a Shifta. This means a leader of an outlawed gang that attacked Muslim caravans. By 1845, Kassa had gathered many devoted followers. This alarmed empress Menen. She, therefore, tried to make Kassa

loyal to her and her son Ras Ali. She gave her granddaughter, Tewabeck, in marriage to Kassa. She also made him the governor of Qwarra. Tewabeck was the daughter of Ras Ali.

In 1846, Kassa rebelled against Menen and Ras Ali. He defeated a force sent against him by Menen and by January 1847, he occupied Gondar, the capital. He captured both Menen and her husband Emperor Yohannis III. He only released them when Ras Ali gave him the title of Dejazmach. He also made him the governor of most of the central provinces in the empire.

In 1852, however, the Kassa was again in rebellion against Ras Ali. He defeated all the forces sent against him by Ras Ali. Finally on June 29, 1853, the Kassa met Ras Ali himself and defeated him after a bloody battle at a place called Ayshall. Ras Ali fled. This brought to an end the rule of the Oromo dynasty in Ethiopia. In February, Kassa met and defeated Wube, the other powerful figure in a bloody battle near a place called Deresse. Two of Wube's sons died in the battle. Wube himself was taken prisoner. Of the powerful men in the empire, Kassa had defeated them all except the ruler of Shoa.

Two days after the battle with Wube, Kassa was anointed and crowned the Neguse Negest by the Abuna. He chose as his throne name Tewodros or Theodore.

Theodore's attempt at re-unification in Ethiopia

The political reform in Ethiopia first of all demanded that the country should be united. To a certain extent, this had already been achieved through Theodore's victories even before he became the emperor. He had already defeated Ras Ali and Wube together with their supporters. This meant that the northern and central regions of the empire had already been united. Now only the Oromo territories of Yeju and Wollo and the Kingdom of Shoa remained to be incorporated. Theodore immediately set himself the task of reconquering those areas.

He immediately left for the Oromo territories. After several months of conflicts, the Oromo resistance was broken. On 22 September 1855, Maqdala, the Oromo stronghold was captured by Theodore. He was later to make the place his headquarters. Theodore appointed a governor over the area and proceeded to Shoa. However, Negus Hayle Melekot of Shoa died in November 1855. This demoralised the warriors of Shoa. The kingdom was conquered by Theodore's army. The emperor spent some months in Shoa establishing peace and order. He appointed a brother of the dead Hayle Melekot as governor

at Aksum. He then went back to Magdalla, his headquarters. He took with him Haqle Mahlek's *gentry*, the *Moralek* and a number of *knights* own to him.

Political reforms

After the conquests which reunited the country under his rule, Theodore decided to embark on administrative reforms. We have already noted that the feudal system of government had already taken root during the *Zamana Masafint*. Theodore decided to break the feudal system of government. All governors and judges were henceforth appointed by the emperor. In addition they were to receive regular salaries. He dismissed most of the existing *Rasas* and appointed his own nominees in their places. Most of the appointments were made according to the emperor's dictates. They were no longer held by right of hereditary succession as during the *Zamana Masafint*. The powers of the *Rasas* were also restricted. This raised or restored the status of the emperor as the central figure in the empire.

Foundation of a new capital

Theodore was determined not only to change the political system but also the old capital which was associated with it. He therefore abandoned Gondar and transferred the capital to Magdalla. In any case, most of the palaces at Gondar were already falling into ruins. In 1866, all the wealth from the 44 churches in Gondar were transferred to Magdalla. Some 900 precious manuscripts were also taken away. Gondar was then burnt down on the orders of the emperor. The capital was thus transferred from Tigre region to that of Amhara.

Judicial reforms

At the time Theodore came to power, law and order had broken down. He encouraged all those who were wronged to appeal to him. All those who were destitutes were also called upon to come to him for support. The emperor sat for several hours almost daily to attend to those who came crying for *law* (*justice*). His method of justice was said to be fairer than what obtained before. He forbade the castration of people as a punishment for whatever offence. He also abolished some of the old ways of judging murderers. For example, before the rule of Theodore, a kinsman of a murderer had to pay ransom or answer with his life. This was also the same with someone who caused the death of another person by accident.

It should, however, be noted that punishment during the reign of Theodore was equally very severe on all major crimes. Execution or cutting off of hands and feet was the punishment for robbery, murder and treason. No official who was corrupt, however high, went unpunished. Even the Abba Salama, the Abuna, was prosecuted when he was found to be corrupt. It is stated that Ethiopia became more peaceful. There was safety of life and property which was noticed by several European travellers during the period.

Religious reforms

Theodore was himself deeply religious. He did not like adultery. Although his wife Tewabeck never gave him a child, he remained strictly faithful to her. When she died, it took the clergy eighteen months to convince him that the Holy Scriptures were not against a second marriage. By his example, Theodore thus discouraged polygamy and concubinage which was rampant among the nobility. Theodore was also against bribery, lying and all kinds of dishonesty. The emperor showed real concern for the poor and the needy. He was extremely generous. Theodore, tried to reform the morality of his people by his example. We should not forget that the emperor believed that he was the 'King Elect by God'.

Theodore believed that to unite the empire more closely, there should be less religious differences. He ordered the Muslims to convert to Christianity within a year or leave his empire. He also tried to reconcile the doctrinal differences among the Ethiopian clergy. The Abuna had been brought and installed in the capital together with the other leading clergy. At first, relations between the Church and Theodore were cordial. Later, however, there were disagreements when Theodore wanted to reform the Church, as we shall see below

Economic reforms

Theodore, from the beginning of his reign, forbade slave trade in the Ethiopian highlands. He also recruited instructors, engineers, builders and artisans of all kinds from western Europe. He even entertained the project of sending some of his most intelligent subjects to France and England to learn useful arts and manufacturing. These brilliant ideas however, were never fulfilled. The European powers refused to cooperate.

To improve commerce, he abolished a number of taxes and tolls which merchants were forced to pay. He decreed that tolls or duties should be collected at three places only throughout Ethiopia. In 1855,

Theodore desired that everyone should return to his lawful occupation. The weaver to trade and the farmer to produce agricultural crops. His judicial reforms, as we have already noted, reduced robbery and brigandage. The roads became safer for caravans again. Because of that, trade improved.

The Church was the richest institution in Ethiopia. It owned vast lands. It also had a large amount of wealth in gold and silver and so on. In addition, the churchmen, as we have already noted, were corrupt. Theodore wanted to get money for his projects. He also wanted the churchmen to be worthy of their calling. He therefore decided to reform the Church. He attempted to reduce the number of the clergy. He also wanted to reduce the land under the Church. Finally, he wanted the priests to depend on their salaries like the *Kassis*. These reforms as we have already noted led to great disagreement between Theodore and the clergy. These disagreements contributed to the failure of Theodore's reforms as we shall see later.

Military reforms

The first thing that Theodore saw on coming to power was the need to have a strong, modern army loyal to him. He first of all integrated the various military forces of the empire into one national army under his command. During the *Zamana Masafint*, we saw that one of the problems of the puppet emperors was their lack of any army under their commands.

Under Theodore, the army was reorganised into regiments. Soldiers from several provinces were mixed into the regiments. Officers of various grades who owed loyalty only to the emperor were appointed to lead each regiment. The army generals were given high titles. But they were never given the power of administration, judgment of cases or collection of taxes as was the case during the *Zamana Masafint*. In addition, army officers and their men were put on fixed salaries. The number of servants who followed the soldiers and their officers to battles were greatly reduced. This was in order to reduce expenses and to allow the army to move from one place to another more quickly. The army was forbidden to confiscate the properties of the peasants as was the case during the *Zamana Masafint*.

Theodore was determined to have a well-drilled modern army. As early as 1853, Theodore employed some Turks and a British adventurer called John Bell to help him in drilling and disciplining his army. In addition to having a disciplined army, Theodore wanted his soldiers to be armed with modern weapons. He found it difficult, however, to transport arms from Europe. The Egyptians were in control



Emperor Theodoric

...the ... of ... and Turkey were hostile to ... Theodore's arms to pass ... therefore, became determined to ... He employed European missionaries ... experts to construct for him a cannon, ... He was overjoyed when in 1861, they ... He presented the ... to show his appreciation. Later on ... a cannon capable of discharging a 1000 ... It weighed seven tons and ... to pull it.

... a ... of road building was started. ... of Ethiopia. The king participated ... of his road. He worked with his own hands ... night. This forced the people who did not like ... hand. The roads were designed to link ... and Maqdaia. It was situated in a ... European travellers who visited the areas ... was excellent.

... his craftsmen manufactured at least twelve ... Two of these cannons could still be seen at ... capital.

Theodore's foreign relations

Theodore's external policies looked even more ambitious than his internal policies. He intended to re-conquer all the coastal areas being ... by the Turks and the Egyptians. He considered even ... his territory by right. He also dreamed of ... Jerusalem. In short, he wanted to fulfil the prophecy ... Theodore who would conquer the world and unite ... No doubt it was here that Theodore started to ... He assumed that the European countries being Christian ... ally with him. He was in for a surprise! As far back as ... England had a consul at the Port of Massawa. ... a treaty signed with Ras Ali in 1849, the Consul of ... over all European traders and travellers ... the British consul brought the subject of ... the latter did not like it.

... stated that he had not found the history of the ... in Ethiopia. He categorically refused giving ... laws, he said, should be enough ... This drew the attention that he would

soon send embassies not only to England but also to all the other great European powers. He also intended to treat them on equal terms.

Relations between Theodore and Egypt took a different turn from what he expected. He thought the Egyptians would attack him either to gain territory or simply to support Islam. However, the Patriarch or head of the Egyptian Coptic Church arranged a peaceful relations between the two rulers. Theodore sent a friendly letter and gifts to Said of Egypt (1854-1863). In the letter, Theodore told Said that he was happy to hear that in Egypt, Muslims and Christians were living together in peace. In 1859, Said sent a friendly reply to Theodore. He also sent him four cannons. This was evidence that the Egyptian viceroy had no plan of attacking Ethiopia at that time.

However, the rebellion of the regional governor of Tigre as we shall see brought some complications. In 1856, Agaw Neguse of Tigre rebelled. He sought the support of the French in his bid to regain his independence. He was encouraged to do so by the European Catholic missionaries who were still in northern Ethiopia. In 1859, the French sent a mission to Neguse to see what could be done to help him. This led Theodore to abandon everything and march with his army to Tigre. By the middle of January 1860, the forces of Neguse were crushed. However it was only in the following year that the rebellion of Neguse was brought to an end when he was caught and executed.

The defeat of Neguse's rebellion in Tigre brought Theodore face to face with the Turks who were still occupying the coastal areas of Ethiopia. Theodore wanted to attack the coastal areas and regain Ethiopia's occupied territories. But he was aware that the European powers did not approve an attack on Turkey. He was determined therefore to send ambassadors to Europe to explain and justify his position. In 1862 Theodore sent letters to Queen Victoria of Britain and Napoleon III, Emperor of France. Letters were also sent to the kings of Russia, Prussia and Austria. In the letters, he explained that the Turks had occupied Ethiopian lands. They also prevented his ambassadors from passing through Ethiopian territory which they occupied. In the letters to Queen Victoria and Napoleon III, Theodore requested a safe passage to Europe for his ambassadors.

The French replied his letter. They, however, did not say anything about the requests of the emperor. In fact the letter mentioned that the French emperor was the Protector of all the Catholics in the world. This, Theodore took as a rebuke to him. The British in whom the emperor had high hopes of support took a very long time to reply his letter. Britain at that time was friendly with the Ottoman Sultan. It did not want to establish any diplomatic relations with Ethiopia so as not to annoy the Turks. To make matters worse, Cameron, the British

consul, kept on exchanging friendly visits and letters with Egyptians who were occupying Sudan. This aroused the suspicions of Theodore. He thought that Britain, which Cameron represented, was siding with the enemy. Moreso Egypt was becoming more and more aggressive.

When Britain finally responded to Theodore's letter, it was to make matters worse. A letter was brought to Cameron, the British consul, ordering him to leave Ethiopia for Massawa. He was reminded that he was only consul at the port of Massawa. He had no official business in Ethiopia. There was no letter for Theodore. There was even no mention of him in the letter to Cameron. To worsen matters, Theodore found the gifts brought by the British messengers insulting. He was brought a carpet. On it was a drawing of a turbaned soldier attacking a lion and behind him a European on a horse. Theodore interpreted this to mean: the lion was he, himself; the turbaned soldier the Egyptian; and the horseman the French who were supporting the Egyptians. Theodore's conclusion was that Britain was abandoning him for Egypt. This, of course, was true. This was the period of the rule of Khedive Ismail in Egypt (1863-79). Because of the American civil war, Britain was getting a large part of her cotton supplies from Egypt. Britain, therefore, could not have risked her economic relations with Egypt for the sake of Theodore.

All these and many more angered Theodore. He prevented Cameron and his party from leaving Ethiopia. He put them in chains. It was this incident that finally led to war between Britain and Ethiopia. It also led to Emperor Theodore's tragic death as we shall examine further below.

The collapse of Theodore's reformist policies

Before we discuss the crisis between Theodore and the British, let us first look at what was happening inside Ethiopia.

Theodore's reforms were never welcomed by the nobility and the Church. Nobody would accept losing power and wealth. So these groups did all they could to sabotage Theodore's programmes. The opposition by the clergy was led by the Abuna. In fact in 1864, Abuna Salama was himself imprisoned at Maqdala. He died there in 1867. We have already noted that the Church was the most unifying institution in the empire. It was to the churches and the convents that the sick, the weak and the wounded were brought. Whenever there was conflict, it was the Church that was supposed to resolve it

Therefore Theodore's inability to win the support of the Church was one of the most important factors that led to his failure to unite Ethiopia. The clergy influenced the people to rebel against the emperor. Some of them even told the people that the emperor had become a Protestant or Muslim.

The nobility resisted Theodore's unification programmes. Throughout his reign, he was in the field fighting rebels and rivals. As soon as one was defeated, another would rise. We have already noted that the first challenge to Theodore's rule came from Agaw Neguse of Tigre. By the latter part of Theodore's reign, he found himself in great difficulties. In Wollo, the Oromo were in rebellion. In Shoa, Bezahch, a local prince declared his independence. To make matters worse, in 1865, Menelik escaped from prison and fled back to Shoa. Menelik was the son of King Hayle Melekot of Shoa. Menelik, we noted, was taken to Maqdala by Theodore after he defeated Shoa in 1855. As we shall see in the next chapter, Menelik was to become the future Emperor of Ethiopia. Gojam too rebelled under another noble called Tedia Gwalu.

By 1866, most of Ethiopia was in the hands of rebels. Theodore only controlled Begandar, Waala, Dalanta and some minor areas. His attempts to find non-military solutions to disagreements with his rivals were all rejected.

The opposition by the nobility and the Church meant that Theodore had to rely more and more on his soldiers. But using soldiers meant the repressive measures had to be used. This in turn made the emperor very unpopular among the people who suffered at the hands of the soldiers. In addition, a worse problem faced Theodore. We have noted that by 1866, the emperor controlled only a limited area of the empire. The upkeep of the army became too heavy a burden for this small area. In addition, the area was the home country of most of the soldiers. It was no longer possible for the emperor to feed and clothe an army which was estimated to be between 40 and 60,000 men. By the beginning of 1867, the soldiers began to desert the emperor. In the middle of 1867, his army consisted of no more than 10,000 men. Several of the rebel chiefs had larger armies at their disposal.

The storming of Maqdala by the British army and the death of Emperor Theodore

We have earlier on noted that due to his disappointment over the British attitude to his letters, Theodore arrested the British consul and his party. He said he was not going to release them until he obtained

a reply to his requests. Initially, Britain wanted to respond to the emperor's wishes. But she later changed her mind. She decided to free the captives by force. This decision was helped by the report sent to Britain by the British representatives in Ethiopia. They stated that Theodore was no longer the powerful ruler he had been only a few years earlier. They predicted that if he was not very lucky, his rule would come to an end within a few years.

Britain thus decided to send a military force into Ethiopia. The venture was to cost 9 million pounds. Most of the soldiers who numbered 32,000 were Indians. They were under the command of Sir Robert Napier. On Good Friday, 10 April 1868, a battle took place on the plains of Aroge. The forces of the emperor were heavily defeated, about 700-800 of them were killed. Twice that number were wounded. Of the British soldiers, twenty were wounded. Of these only 2 later died as a result of the injuries they sustained.

On the following Saturday, Theodore released the European prisoners and on Sunday, all other missionaries and the artisans were allowed to go. He sent Napier a peace offering of 100 cows and 500 sheep. Napier refused the peace offering and stormed Maqdala. Theodore saw that resistance was useless. He dismissed his followers, exclaiming, 'It is finished! Sooner than fall into his hands, I will kill myself'. He then brought out his pistol and shot himself.

The British prepared to withdraw. Before leaving, they destroyed the Maqdala fortress. They also destroyed most of the cannons there. In addition, they took away Theodore's young son, Alamayehu at the request of his mother. Finally they looted about four hundred manuscripts. They gave Kassa, the governor of Tigre 12 heavy guns, 752 muskets and a large supply of ammunition. These were to play a major role in the struggle for succession as we shall see in the next chapter.

Theodore had failed in his ambition as we have seen. But he, it was, who brought the 'era of judges or princes' to an end. He introduced the idea of a strong monarchy. His defeat by the British army did not lead to the occupation of Ethiopia as it happened in many areas that we have so far examined. In short, Theodore prepared the ground for the reforms that his successors built on.

Questions

1. Which of the following is correct?
 - A. Theodore's actual name was Kassa
 - B. The father of Theodore was called Kinfu

- C. The mother of Theodore was called Qwarra
 - D. Theodore's mother intended that he would become a soldier after his education
 - E. Koso is some kind of food in Ethiopia
2. Kassa became a shifta because
- A. he was denied the hand of Ras Ali's daughter in marriage
 - B. he wanted to avenge the humiliation done to his mother when his father died
 - C. his ambition of becoming the governor of Qwarra was denied him
 - D. Empress Menen wanted to arrest him
 - E. he wanted to amass wealth so that he could use it to become emperor
3. Theodore and the clergy failed to agree because
- A. Theodore was considered unreligious by the clergy
 - B. the clergy were not happy with the tradition of bringing the Abuna from Egypt which Theodore revived
 - C. the clergy were opposed to Theodore's attempt to reform the Church
 - D. Theodore considered the clergy to be corrupt and illiterates and so he wanted to replace them
 - E. Theodore put Abuna Salama in prison where he eventually died
4. Britain sent the Napier expedition against Ethiopia because
- A. Theodore insulted their Queen in a letter he sent to her
 - B. they wanted to loot the precious documents of Ethiopia which they learnt Theodore had in his possession
 - C. they wanted to free the Englishmen who were being detained by Theodore
 - D. they were in agreement with Egypt to help them conquer Ethiopia
 - E. Theodore rejected the British proposal to annex Massawa and other coastal areas of Ethiopia
5. Write short notes on the following:
- i) Shifta
 - ii) Empress Menen
 - iii) Maqdala
 - iv) Agaw Neguse

6. Who were the nobles who dominated the political affairs between 1830 and the time when Theodore rose to power?
7. Outline the conquests of Theodore in his attempt to reunify the country. Did he succeed in that attempt?
8. Assess the reforms of Theodore
9. How do you explain the lack of enthusiasm of the European powers to aid Ethiopia against Turkey and Egypt?
10. What is the place of Theodore in Ethiopian history?

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Chapter Eight

Developments under Emperor Yohannes IV: Egyptian aggression and renewal of European interests in Ethiopia: 1872-1889

Introduction

The death of an Ethiopian emperor, we have already noted, was almost always accompanied by succession disputes. The death of Theodore was not different. Three rival personalities held power in different parts of the country. The first was Menelik who made himself the King of Shoa. The second was Ras Gobase of Amhara, Wag and Lasta. The third was Kassa, the regional governor of Tigre.

In 1868, Ras Gobase of Amhara captured the capital. He had himself crowned emperor with the throne name of Takia Giorgis. He ruled for three uneventful years. It is doubtful if he controlled any other part of the empire with the exception of his own region.

The death of Takia Giorgis in 1872 opened the struggle for the throne between Menelik and Kassa. We should recall that before the British left Ethiopia in 1868, they gave firearms and ammunitions to Kassa. He used that to good advantage. Menelik soon found out that he had no military force to fight Kassa. So in 1872 Kassa was crowned emperor. He took the throne name of Yohannes (or John).

Internal developments

Yohannes had a more closer working relationship with the Church than Theodore. He presented himself as the friend and protector of the clergy. Before his coronation, he sent an emissary to Egypt to obtain an Abuna. Later on he sent money to the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem. He built a number of churches, notably at Adwa and Maqdala. He gave extensive land to the Church especially at the ancient city of Axum.

Yohannes felt he had a mission to Christianise the whole world.

He converted his wife Halima, who was a Muslim, before marrying her. He attempted to convert all the Muslims in Ethiopia to Christianity. Religion was one of the issues discussed in the Peace Accord between Yohannes and Menelik in 1878. They agreed that Muslims and traditionists in the empire and its peripheries must be converted to Christianity. Muslims were given three years and traditionists five years within which to convert to Christianity. All non-Christian government officials were asked to be baptised. The two principal chiefs of Wallo province who were Muslims were baptised. Imam Muhammad Ali was Christened Mikael and Imam Abba Wata was Christened Hayla Maryam. Their followers were also converted to Christianity. Numerous mosques and shrines of traditional religions were destroyed.

It should be noted that most of those who converted to Christianity did it only for political reasons. One Italian missionary who was there at the time gave a good picture of what happened. He saw converts going straight from the church to the mosque to have baptism removed. Many were referred to as 'Christians by day and Muslims by night'. Other Muslims were forced to flee from the country.

Yohannes persecuted all those who converted to the Roman Catholic Church. In his accord with Menelik, it was agreed that Catholic priests should be expelled from the country.

Yohannes was a religious fanatic. He was determined to purify religious practices even among the followers of the religion. He forbade the practice of witchcraft. He also prohibited the smoking of tobacco and the taking of snuff. Theodore attempted to unify Ethiopia by force of arms, Yohannes on the other hand attempted to win the Rasas through conciliatory policy. The best example of Yohannes's conciliatory policy is demonstrated in his accord with Menelik of Shoa.

In 1876, as we shall examine further below, Yohannes won a decisive victory over the Egyptian forces. He seized a large amount of arms from the defeated enemy. We shall discuss all these further below. What we want to say here is that by the time Yohannes and Menelik confronted each other, Yohannes was the stronger of the two. However, his negotiations with Menelik showed his conciliatory nature. Yohannes and Menelik reached an accord in 1878 which covered the following points:

1. Menelik who referred to himself as emperor since the ascension of Yohannes agreed to stop doing so. This means he recognised Yohannes as the emperor;
2. Yohannes recognised Menelik's autonomy, subject to the payment of tax;

3. Yohannes agreed that Menelik should style himself Negus (i.e. 'king') of Shoa and Wallo. He also accepted that Menelik's descendants should succeed him as kings of those provinces;
4. Each ruler promised to help the other in time of need;
5. Menelik agreed that within two years, Europeans would be prevented from coming to Shoa from the port of Zeila.

After this accord, Yohannes crowned Menelik as the Negus of Shoa and Wallo. In 1882, the cordial relationship existing between the two rulers was further strengthened through a dynastic marriage. Yohannes married his son Araya Selassie to King Menelik's daughter, Zaudatu. The latter was to become empress in 1917. She ruled as regent for her cousin who became Emperor Haile Selassie in 1930. Yohannes also nominated governors for Gondar, Begandar and Tigre. He removed the seat of government from Maqdala and transferred it to Makalle on the Tigre plateau.

Egyptian aggression

During the first part of his reign, Yohannes was confronted by an Egyptian aggression. At that time, Egypt, under the successors of Muhammad Ali, was the most powerful state on the African continent. We have already noted that Egypt had cultivated aggressive tendencies towards Ethiopia since the rule of Khedive Ismail. In May 1868, one month after the death of Theodore, the Ottoman Sultan transferred the port of Massawa once more to the rule of Egypt. Having occupied the port of Massawa, the Egyptians soon occupied the neighbouring port of Zulla. In 1872, the Egyptians took possession of Bongos and Halhal, two Ethiopian districts on the Sudan Border. In addition, the chief of Ailet, an inland area opposite Massawa, sold the district to the Egyptians.

Yohannes tried to get the help of the British against the Egyptian encroachment. The British, however, refused to commit themselves. Encouraged, thus, the Egyptians occupied more ports of Ethiopia. They also pushed inland and occupied the city-state of Harar. The Egyptians then prepared to make a massive attack on Ethiopia. The aim was to annex northern Ethiopia as far as Mareb river. Khedive Ismail sent a strong force of about 2500 men against Ethiopia. They were led by an Egyptian nobleman called Arekel Bey. Officers included Europeans who were in the pay of Egypt. They were armed with modern rifles. Yohannes ordered all able-bodied men throughout the kingdom to fight the enemy. The Egyptian invasion was seen as an encroachment of Islam against Christian Ethiopia. Fighting the Egyptians was therefore seen as a crusade. Yohannes was able to assemble about 70,000 armed men. On 15 November 1875, the two armies met

at a place called Gundat. The invaders were almost annihilated. Arekel and two of the European officers were killed.

In February 1876, Khedive Ismail sent an even larger force against Ethiopia. It was commanded by Rhahib Pasha. The Khedive's son Hassan Pasha and an American Officer called General Loring also accompanied the troops. They were said to number about 20,000. Again Yohannes called the Ethiopians to defend their country and their religion. About 200,000 Ethiopians answered the call of the emperor. When the two forces met at a place called Gura, the Egyptians were again decisively defeated. Only a few hundreds of them survived. The Egyptians left behind them 16 cannons and about 13000 rifles. A large amount of ammunition and other supplies were also captured.

The defeat of the Egyptian forces at Gundat and Gura was a severe blow to Khedive Ismail. He soon became bankrupt and was deposed in June 1879. In fact the defeat of the Egyptian forces contributed to the disaffection in the Egyptian army. In Book One we discussed the revolt of native Egyptian army officers against the Khedive. The leader of that force we learnt was Colonel Ahmed Urbai Pasha. It should be interesting to note that Ahmed Urbai was one of the Egyptian colonels of Massawa when Ethiopia defeated the Egyptian army. After the defeat Egypt was forced to negotiate peace with Ethiopia. In 1879, Khedive Ismail sent his governor of Sudan, Charles Gordon to negotiate with Yohannes. The Egyptians withdrew troops from most of the areas they occupied. They still, however, occupied Ethiopian lowlands bordering the Red Sea. This means Yohannes's ambition of throwing the Egyptians out of all the Ethiopian territories which they occupied had not been achieved. Yohannes was also unable to achieve his ambition of gaining access to the Sea.

Despite these problems, however, the victory over the Egyptian forces raised the prestige of Emperor Yohannes. The large amount of arms which he seized from the Egyptians also strengthened his position. He became the most powerful ruler in what is now referred to as the 'horn of Africa'. It was after the victory over the Egyptians that Yohannes felt strong enough to face King Menelik of Shoa.

Renewal of European interests in Ethiopia

While Yohannes was facing the Egyptian aggression, another serious problem was developing in the region. The long isolation of the region from European economic and political interests was gradually

coming to an end. Already in 1862, the French had laid claim to the port of Obok. This was later rejected by the people. It was also not favoured by the British because of their rivalry with the French. But the interest of the French in Obok was later on to grow into the colony of French Somaliland or today's Republic of Djibouti. Next to the French, the British were also already on the scene as we have already noted. Their invasion of Ethiopia in 1868 when they defeated the forces of Emperor Theodore has been discussed. This was followed by the opening of the Suez Canal in November 1869. From then on, the areas along the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden became very vital to the Europeans. We have already examined the importance of the Canal in Book One. We said it was to shorten the journey from Europe to India and other countries. In those days, we noted, there were no aeroplanes and all long journeys were made by sea. The ships had to move through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden before going into the Indian Ocean to continue their journey. This was why the areas along these waterways became of vital interest to the Europeans.

In the same month that the Suez Canal was opened, a third European country arrived on the scene. In November 1869, Italy claimed to have bought the port of Assab from the Afar Sultans. While Emperor Yohannes was grappling with the Egyptian aggression, the Italians were having friendly relations with King Menelik of Shoa. We shall examine this in the next chapter.

We have already seen that Britain refused Yohannes's appeal to mediate in the conflicts between Egypt and Ethiopia. However, in 1882, as we have noted in Book One, Britain colonised Egypt. They were soon to face the Mahdist rebellion in the Sudan. In 1883, Britain decided that the Egyptian forces should pull out of Sudan. The Egyptian occupation therefore collapsed in the Red Sea and other areas bordering Ethiopia. Britain sent an officer called Rear Admiral Hewett to negotiate with Yohannes. The latter was requested to assist European officers who were besieged by the Mahdists to be evacuated. Yohannes agreed to assist but that in return all the Ethiopian areas still occupied by Egypt should be returned to him. He also asked for the control of the port of Massawa. Britain agreed to the first request. On Massawa, however, they said the port would come under British occupation. Ethiopians were, nevertheless, promised free access to the port. The Anglo-Ethiopian treaty to that effect was signed by the two powers in June 1884.

We should, however, note that this was the period of European scramble for Africa. In February 1885, exactly eight months of the Anglo-Ethiopian treaty, the Italians seized the port of Massawa. The occupation was supported by Britain. It was not long before this

when the Italians stopped Ethiopians from importing goods through the port. They also attempted to occupy some neighbouring Ethiopian villages.

By 1887, war was imminent between the Italians and Yohannes. The Italians were, however, anxious not to engage the Ethiopians in a battle. They knew that the mountainous regions of Ethiopia were difficult. They therefore asked Britain to mediate and resolve the differences peacefully. Admiral Hewett was again sent by Britain to Yohannes. The latter was, however, surprised when Hewett asked him to surrender Ethiopian border villages to Italy. These were the same villages which were returned to Ethiopia during the Anglo-Ethiopian treaty of 1884. More annoying to Yohannes was the fact that the 1884 agreement was negotiated with the same Rear Admiral Hewett. Yohannes wrote an angry letter to Queen Victoria accusing the British of going back on their agreement with him. He told her that if she wished to make peace, it should be when the Italians were in their country and the Ethiopians in theirs.

Mahdist attack, death of Yohannes and the Italian occupation of Eritrea

Yohannes' attention, we have noted, was focussed on the Red Sea. This was the area from where he believed the Italians would attack his country. In the meantime, however, the Mahdist in the Sudan had defeated the Anglo-Egyptian forces in 1885. They had already declared a Jihad against Christians. In 1889, they found the Sudanese frontier with Ethiopia unguarded. They, therefore, invaded the country. Yohannes collected a large force and met the invaders at the Ethiopian border town of Matamma. On 10 March 1889, the Ethiopian forces were able to defeat the enemy. However, a stray bullet hit and killed Yohannes, almost towards the end of the battle. The news of the emperor's death caused confusion among the Ethiopian warriors. The army disintegrated.

The Mahdist, however, did not press their luck. They withdrew. It was the Italians who took advantage of the confusion in Ethiopia. They rapidly advanced inland. By the end of 1889, they had occupied the northern area, now called Eritrea. It had its capital at Asmara. The creation of the colony of Eritrea by the Italians was to become critical in the history of Ethiopia.

Yohannes and Theodore had the same aims. They wanted to unify Ethiopia under the monarchy. They also wanted to associate their rule

with a strong Ethiopian Coptic Church. Their approaches, however, were different. Theodore relied on force to conquer the Rasas and forced them to recognise him as Neguse Negest. Yohannes on the other hand depended on conciliatory methods. Theodore, at the end of his reign failed as we have seen. Yohannes was not only conciliatory but foreign aggressions which he had to face meant that he had little choice. However, it may not be correct to say that Yohannes succeeded where Theodore failed.

Yohannes, by the time he died, was the most powerful ruler in the horn of Africa. He was able to unite the whole Christian lands of Ethiopia. However, this may not have been the sort of unity which Theodore would have wanted. This is because it was the feudal system which was in operation that Theodore wanted to change. As we have already noted, for example, the kingdom of Shoa was virtually independent of the central government. In addition Yohannes failed to gain the lowlands of Tigre which bordered the Sea. Ethiopia, thus, remained a landlocked country. Yohannes also failed to recover the city-state of Harar. Yohannes, however, succeeded in uniting the throne and the Church. He was a strong believer in the Coptic Church. Instead of taking money from the Church which Theodore wanted to do, we saw that he made the Church wealthier. Yohannes also gained prestige as the defender of the state and Christianity against what was seen as Islamic aggression. The number of volunteers who answered his call showed the support which he had among the people. His defeat of the Egyptian invaders also helped to raise his prestige.

Yohannes also faced a more serious challenge from the European powers than Theodore. He had been handling the situation well until the Mahdist attack when he lost his life. It means the rule of Yohannes coincided with the European scramble for Africa which we have been examining since Book One. That was clearly demonstrated by the occupation of the Eritrean province by Italy. Britain, we saw, supported Italy so as to keep France, her main rival, out. Would Ethiopia be virtually colonised as it was happening in almost all African countries during that time? This was left to the next emperor to sort out.

Questions

1. In 1872, Yohannes came to power without the usual succession conflicts because
 - A. he was the most eligible prince among the claimants
 - B. he was supported by the Church

- C. the people really loved him
 - D. he had the most powerful army in the country
 - E. he had an accord with Menelik who agreed that Yohannes should be the emperor
2. Yohannes' actual name was
 - A. Takia Giorgis
 - B. Gobase
 - C. Kassa
 - D. Yohannes
 - E. John
 3. Egypt became aggressive towards Ethiopia
 - A. during the rule of Muhammad Ali
 - B. after the British occupation of Egypt in 1882
 - C. during the rule of Khedive Ismail
 - D. after the death of Khedive Ismail
 - E. after the revolt of the Mahdist in the Sudan
 4. The Italians in 1887 did not want an open war with Ethiopia because
 - A. they had problems at home
 - B. they considered the Ethiopians fellow Christians
 - C. they knew it would be difficult fighting in the mountainous regions
 - D. they knew Yohannes had a more powerful army
 - E. Britain promised to come to the aid of Ethiopia
 5. Write short notes on four of the following
 - i) Charles Gordon
 - ii) Suez Canal
 - iii) Anglo-Ethiopian treaty of 1884
 - iv) Assab
 - v) Zaudatu
 6. Assess the religious reforms of Yohannes. How successful were they?
 7. Outline the Yohannes-Menelik accord of 1878. How successful was the accord?
 8. Discuss the conflicts between Ethiopia and Egypt during

the reign of Emperor Yohannes. How successful was Egypt in achieving its aims?

9. What are the reasons that led to the renewal of European interests in Ethiopia during the rule of Yohannes?
10. Compare the rule of Yohannes with that of Theodore.

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Chapter Nine

Revolution and the rise of new states in the northern Nguni area of South Africa: C. 1790-1818

Introduction

In the nineteenth century, a series of destructive wars engulfed Southern Africa. These wars were termed Mfecane or Difaqane. Mfecane is one of the most important events in the history of Southern Africa. We are going to examine this in the next chapter. However, Mfecane had its origin in the area of northern Nguni which is today's Natal State in South Africa. It was the sociopolitical and military revolutions among the northern Nguni peoples which ultimately led to Mfecane. In this chapter, therefore, we shall examine the revolution in northern Nguni.

We shall begin by examining the ecology of Southern Africa. We shall then briefly discuss the main inhabitants of South Africa. We shall also outline the reasons which led to the revolution in northern Nguni and then discuss some of the changes brought by the revolution.

Ecology of Southern Africa

Southern Africa can be divided into five major ecological zones: The northern region is the largest zone. It is a tropical bushland. Most of the area is covered by open woodland made up of deciduous trees. Some patches of evergreen forests can be found in some areas of the region. There is not much rainfall here. The western zone is an area of droughtland. It includes the Kalahari desert which is partially covered with grass and thin bush. Here, too, the rainfall is rather low.

The central plateau zone is situated east of the Kalahari desert and south of the Limpopo. It is an area of open grassland. The eastern region is characterised by high relief into which several rivers have cut deep valleys. Most of the important rivers in South Africa are

located in this region. Between the major rivers, the ground often rises to a height of about 1000m above the river valleys themselves. Thus the zone is characterised by highlands, lowlands and coastal plains. As a result, there are considerable variations in rainfall and vegetation over relatively short distances. This is the area where the Nguni people were found as we shall discuss later. Finally, the southern region enjoys a Mediterranean type of climate. This is very good for the cultivation of grapes, wheat, barley, tobacco and other crops and fruits. The presence of shrubs also meant that the area was good for the domestication of animals. Certainly it was also a place where many wild animals were located. This means that the area was attractive to hunters, pastoralists and farmers both from within and outside Southern Africa. The Mediterranean type of climate was also conducive for Europeans to settle there.

Earlier peoples of Southern Africa

We do not know exactly when modern man started to live in Southern Africa. However, several studies have indicated that by the tenth century A.D. modern man had been in this region for several centuries.

The San

The San are thought to be the earliest modern group to inhabit South Africa. In many books, the San are referred to as Bushmen. This is a derogatory term which is now avoided. The San are generally short people with brownish-yellow skin. Their language is distinct because it has click sound. They preferred to live in caves and when these were not available, they built rough grass huts to live in. The San were hunters and gatherers. They moved from one area to another in bands. They used bows and poisoned arrows as well as dogs in hunting. They dug roots and collected vegetables and honey with which they prepared their food. They obtained meat from the animals which they hunted. They also obtained clothing from the skins of the animals which they killed.

The San had no chiefs but each band had a custodian. He was the head of the band but his powers were very limited. He was the leader in a hunt. He also led when the band was moving from one area to another. But he did not settle disputes. When a thief stole someone's honey, for example, the owner had the right to kill the thief. They

worshipped a god called *Kaggen*. They believed this god had the form of a mantis. They also worshipped the sun, the moon and the stars. Unlike the Bantu, the San did not worship their dead ancestors.

The San were expert painters and dancers and once occupied most of East and Central Africa. But by the nineteenth century, they had long lost most of their original homeland to other races. Today, many of them are still found in South-West Africa, Kalahari and Angola. Small groups have also remained in the northern parts of the present Cape Province, Southern Orange Free State and Transvaal, and in the Lesotho mountains.

The Khoikhoi

The Khoikhoi were also one of the earliest modern groups to inhabit Southern Africa. They are popularly known as Hottentots. The latter is a nick-name which like the term 'Bushmen' has become a term for abuse and ridicule in South Africa. The people call themselves Khoikhoi which in their language means 'men of men'. There are many similarities between the Khoikhoi and the San. Like the latter, the Khoikhoi have yellowish skin and their language is also full of clicking sounds. The Khoikhoi also moved around a lot in large bands. They also hunted with bows and poisonous arrows. There were, nevertheless, marked differences between the two groups. In addition to hunting and gathering, the Khoikhoi herded cattle and sheep. In fact a man was considered rich or poor depending on the amount of cattle that he had. The Khoikhoi did not kill their animals just for meat. This was done only in celebrations or rituals. However, they drank the milk of their animals. It was their staple food. The Khoikhoi also got their food through hunting, fishing and gathering. For clothing, they used the skins of their domestic animals and those which they hunted. They had in addition to domestic animals, ornaments like ivory, bracelets, glass beads and several articles made of copper. Most of these were brought from their Bantu neighbours.

The Khoikhoi rode on their oxen. They even trained their oxen for use in fighting and hunting. The Khoikhoi huts were made of poles covered with reed mats. These were lined with skins especially in the cold season. They lived in camps which were surrounded by fences or bushwood.

The Khoikhoi had chiefs who together with clan elders settled disputes. The chiefs had powers of even sentencing a man to death. The chiefs, nonetheless, did not interfere in the disputes between members of the same clan. This was the responsibility of clan heads.

In the eleventh century, the Khoikhoi were estimated to number

about 100,000. They were mainly located along the Orange and the coastal belt stretching from South-West Africa (modern Namibia) to Transkei. In the past, there were also some of them in what is now known as Natal. This was where they were met by the Zulu and the Xhosa people who absorbed some of them and pushed others away.

The southern Bantu before the northern Nguni revolution

The largest group in South Africa today is the Bantu. In 1965 there were about 7 million Bantu in South Africa. The Bantu arrived South Africa much later than the San and the Khoikhoi. The actual date of their arrival from areas further north is still uncertain. It is generally accepted that this must have happened several hundred years before the seventeenth century.

The Bantu in Southern Africa are called the southern Bantu. They have some common cultural characteristics. Nevertheless, they consist of several sub-groups who speak several different languages but which in some ways are related to one another. It is possible to divide the southern Bantu into four broad language groups. Each of these contains many sub-groups but all could understand one another. The first sub-division is that of the Nguni – consisting of the Zulu, Ndebele, Xhosa, Ndwendwe, Swazi and many others. The Nguni adopted more of the clicking sounds of the languages of the earlier peoples than any other Bantu group. By the sixteenth century they were well established at the coastal areas of Zululand and Natal. By the end of the eighteenth century, they had expanded beyond the Great Fish river in the south.

The second is the Sotho – Tswana sub-group who occupied most of the central plateau between the Drakensburg mountains and the Kalahari desert. It consisted of three sub-groups – the Tswana (Bechuana) who are said to be the earliest of this group to enter South Africa; and the northern and the southern Sotho. The latter two sub-groups were mainly settled in the areas of modern Transvaal and Orange Free States. The third group, the Venda are culturally associated with the Sotho sub-group and were located around Delagoa Bay in modern day Mozambique Republic. This was also the area where the fourth group, the Tsonga, were located.

We shall now discuss some of the characteristics of the southern Bantu before the revolution in northern Nguni region. Naturally our main concentration would be on the Nguni people.

Social and cultural characteristics

One thing to note is the strong influence of the Khoikhoi culture on the southern Bantu peoples. This is more pronounced in Nguni languages and in the culture of herding cattle. The Khoikhoi also influenced the religious beliefs of some of the Nguni groups. The Bantu lived in villages. The Sotho lived in compact villages while the Nguni and others lived in scattered homesteads. As in Buganda, the homesteads of the chiefs were larger than those of the commoners.

The social structure of the southern Bantu had many similarities with the western Bantu especially the Baganda whom we have already examined. Like the Baganda, the Nguni speaking peoples also divided themselves into clans. A clan was composed of a number of lineages whose members claim descent from a common male ancestor. Each homestead comprised a man, his wives, his unmarried daughters, his sons, their children and any poor people who might have attached themselves to him. Like the Baganda, the southern Bantu people also had totems corresponding to lineages and clans. Among the Nguni, marriage between members of the same clan was prohibited. This, we saw, was the same practice among the Baganda. However, this prohibition was never observed by other southern Bantu groups like the Sotho and the Tsonga.

The southern Bantu groups used animal skin for clothes. They wore mantles made of ox-hide. Leopard skin cloaks were preserved for the chiefs. The people were experts in processing animal skins till they were as soft as velvet. The people also used ornaments made of copper, iron, shells, feathers and buttons. They wore sandals made of elephant hide.

The most important cultural institution of the southern Bantu was the system of initiation into manhood. This was done when young men born during the same period reached the age of maturity. They were made to undergo the ceremony of circumcision. After this they underwent a prolonged period of living apart from the group. During this period, they were taught the customs and traditions of the group. Usually a son of the ruler of a clan or settlement underwent initiation ceremonies with his agetates. Age groups performed many useful duties for their clans. These included clearing of bushland to make farms and building homesteads for their chiefs.

Religious beliefs

The southern Bantu believed in a supreme being whom they referred to as *Unkulunkulu*. However, as with the Baganda, most of them also

worshipped their dead ancestors. The latter were believed to be offended when their living descendants neglected them. The ancestors were also believed to be angered when juniors showed disrespect to their seniors in the family. Ancestors were also thought to be offended when there were quarrels between members of the family. The ancestors show their anger by inflicting sickness or sterility on their living descendants.

Periodically, people gathered at the graves and shrines of their ancestors to offer sacrifices and make merry. They drank beer, danced and showed love and charity to one another. During great crisis like famines, sacrifices were offered at the shrines of hero-founders or dead chiefs by clan heads or chiefs. Some people were believed to possess witch-craft. Others were thought of as sorcerers. Both were thought to do evil on some members of the community. There were 'witch-doctors' who specialised in 'smelling out' witches and sorcerers. The latter when 'found out' were usually tortured and sometimes killed.

The economy

The southern Bantu peoples were farmers who also kept herds of cattle and flock of sheep and goats. In addition, like the khoikhoi and the San, the Bantu were also skilled hunters and food gatherers. Cattle was considered the most valuable property. A man was considered rich or poor depending on the number of cattle he possessed. Some individuals are said to have owned about 1000 herds of cattle. The latter were never used for meat except during celebrations. For meat, the Bantu depended on the wild animals which they hunted. They, however, drank the milk of their cattle and sheep. Cattle were used in paying for bride wealth called *Loloba*. They were also used in paying fines and for copper and iron ornaments.

The southern Bantu peoples grew sorghum, millet, pumpkins, calabashes, beans, cocoyam, sugar-cane and tobacco. In the eighteenth century, maize was introduced into Southern Africa. In subsequent years, maize quickly replaced other traditional food crops as the staple diet. As in Buganda, most of the work in the farms were done by women. This left men to engage in other occupations like building houses, smithing and other craft works, hunting and fighting wars.

Although most groups engaged in mining and smithing, the Sotho were the most skilful craftsmen in precolonial South Africa. Their smiths knew how to make better weapons and ornaments out of copper and iron. They also had skilled workers in leather, wood and ivory.

The southern Bantu peoples had been trading with each other centuries before the Nguni revolution. The Sotho sold their goods not only to the other Bantu groups but also to the Khoikhoi. Many of the groups also traded with the Portuguese who were settling on the coast of Delagoa Bay in what is now modern Mozambique. From the fifteenth century, for example, the Nguni were said to have been selling ivory to the Europeans. They received beads, cloth and articles made of brass. The trade between the Nguni and the Europeans on the coast was dominated by the Tsonga who occupied the coast. They acted as middlemen in the trade between the Europeans on the coast and the peoples in the interior.

Southern Bantu political systems before the Nguni revolution

The political systems of the southern Bantu were more developed than those of the San and the Khoikhoi. The whole area settled by the Bantu was divided into chiefdoms each headed by a chief called Inkosi. Before the Nguni revolution, however, the Nguni chiefdoms were generally smaller than those of the Sotho.

A Nguni chief had many wives but they did not all live in one homestead. The chief's most senior wife was called 'the right hand wife'. She normally resided at a considerable distance from the palace. The chief normally chose his favourite wife after his installation. She was called the 'great wife' or 'the mother of the country'. She lived in the palace and her first son was normally regarded as the legitimate heir to the throne. Since the 'great wife' was usually married late in the chief's life, the son of the 'right hand wife' was usually older than the heir-apparent. But, as we have seen, the elder son had little hope of becoming chief. This usually led to succession disputes after the death of a chief. It also contributed to the tendency of the elder son who had little hope of becoming chief to move out with his followers and establish a new settlement.

Within the chiefdom, the society was stratified. At the top was the chief and the members of the royal family. The members of the royal clan had greater prestige than other people. In Nguni law, one paid a higher fine for seducing a member of the royal clan. One also paid more cattle as *Loloba* if the girl was from the royal clan. At the bottom of the social ladder were the poor men from other groups who attached themselves to members of a group.

A Nguni chief was, like the kings of Buganda and Dahomey, a very powerful figure. He tried all cases of dispute and his judgment was final. He was also the chief priest of his chiefdom. Every year, the Nguni celebrated the *Umkhosi* or *Incwala*. This was an annual ritual ceremony which was led by the chief. It was supposed to bring the whole group together to celebrate the first-fruit of the season. The chief also offered sacrifices on behalf of his people during droughts or famine.

The chief had a number of personal officers called *Induna* who helped to enforce his commands. One of the *Indunas* acted as the chief deputy. This great *Induna* could be equated with the *Katikiro* of Buganda. The *Induna* were generally chosen from those who were not related to the royal family. This means they would not be tempted to usurp the throne. In addition to the *Indunas*, the chief was also assisted by two councils. The first was an inner council which comprised some leading members of the chief's family, the great *Induna*, close friends of the chief and a few others. The larger council met during important occasions. Its members included members of the inner council, subordinate chiefs and adult members of the chiefdom. The chief had the final say in the decisions of both councils.

Chiefdoms were usually sub-divided and ruled by subordinate chiefs. Many of the latter were members of the ruling family. A subordinate paid tribute to the chief. He attended the court of the chief when called to do so. He and his warriors fought on the side of the chief and anyone who was not satisfied with his judgment could appeal to the chief. Thus, like the kings of Dahomey and Baganda, the Bantu chiefs were also powerful rulers. Nonetheless, as was the case in Buganda, an autocratic chief did not last long. In the long run, his subjects could desert him and migrate to the territory of another ruler. That the chief could be deserted by his people helped in controlling the powers of the chiefs.

Up to the early eighteenth century, warfare was limited and the people generally lived peacefully. Young men raided cattle of other chiefdoms. Warriors of one chiefdom fought those of others. But women and children were not killed during these wars. Only booty in cattle and ornaments were taken after defeating the enemy. In many cases, a day was fixed for fighting and women from each side came to watch and encourage their men. In the military organisation, men of each homestead fought side by side. Thus, fathers, sons, elder brothers and younger brothers fought alongside one another. For arms, the Nguni used long iron-tipped throwing spears. They also had wooden clubs and shields made from elephant hide.

Revolution in northern Nguni area

In the second half of the eighteenth century, there occurred a social upheaval in the Nguni area and by the nineteenth century the upheaval had spread to other areas of South Africa. The revolution was caused by several factors and it directly led to Mfecane as we shall examine in the next chapter

Causes of the revolution in the Nguni area

One of the causes of the Nguni revolution was the steady increase in population among the Nguni. This increase in population was said to have been through natural growth. The introduction of maize in the eighteenth century, as we have already noted, made food production easier. By the late eighteenth century, land was becoming scarce in the region of the Nguni which was in the present Natal state of South Africa. This was followed by frequent conflicts over land and cattle. Increase in population and scarcity of land were the most important causes of the revolution.

By the second half of the eighteenth century, the society had begun to undergo changes among the Bantu as elsewhere in Africa. More and more people were joining settlements where they were not blood-members. A more radical change in dealing with this phenomenon was needed. Also, in the eighteenth century, trade in ivory had become very lucrative to chiefs who controlled it. In addition, there was an increase in trade between the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay with some of the Nguni chiefs. The trade, as we have already noted, was still dominated by the coastal Tsonga. Some scholars feel that this may have been one of the reasons for the revolution. They reason that like the Asante and the Aja, the Nguni may have also wanted to get rid of the middlemen coastal traders and thus deal directly with the Europeans.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, there were widespread long famines among the Nguni and the Sotho. These contributed to the social crisis that led to the revolution. There were also more succession disputes. We earlier noted that those princes who had no hope of becoming chiefs moved to find new settlements with their followers. However, by the eighteenth century, land, as we said, was becoming more scarce. This discouraged princes to move out. This means there were more succession disputes whenever a chief died. For those who opted to move, there was already scarcity of land. Those who decided to move out had to prepare to fight others before they settled in their new homes.

The social, political and economic crisis called for radical political changes. There was need for strong and capable leaders who could carry out these radical reforms. Thus, the emergence of strong military leaders like Dingiswayo, Sobhuza, Zwide, Shaka and many others could be said to have contributed to the revolution in the Nguni area. At the same time, however, we should note that it was the condition at the period which had encouraged the emergence of such types of leaders.

The nature of the revolution in the northern Nguni area

By the second half of the eighteenth century, there was an increase in conflicts among the various groups in the Nguni area. Each chiefdom wanted to have more land for its people to build houses and graze their domestic animals. But land was by this time very scarce. This and the increasing conflicts called for more radical political, military, social, economic and even cultural changes in the Nguni area. The first noticeable reform was the transformation of the political organisation of the chiefdoms. There were attempts to build large states out of the numerous petty chiefdoms which were there. This was done mainly through the use of military force. Weaker chiefdoms were attacked and forcefully incorporated by their stronger neighbours. By the end of the eighteenth century, three large and powerful confederations had emerged in the northern Nguni country. These were the Ngunwane – Dlamini (who later became known as the Swazi), the Mthethwa and the Ndwandwe.

These confederations were dominated by three powerful leaders: Sobhuza, chief of the Ngunwane – Dlamini (later called Swazi); Dingiswayo, chief of Mthethwa and Zwide, chief of Ndwandwe. These rulers initiated the revolution in the Nguni area. These were consolidated and expanded by Shaka as we shall examine in the next chapter. Here we shall outline the other reforms of the three Nguni chiefs. The first one, of course, was the building of the large states which we have already mentioned.

By this time also the position of rulers increased tremendously. They had huge armies under their commands. They forced subordinate chiefdoms to pay them tribute. The Umkosi and Incwala ritual ceremonies now became avenues for glorifying the chiefs. At the ceremony, the chief and his army were treated with medicine to make them strong. Every man was regarded as 'a shield of the chief'. Any

attack on a Nguni man was treated as an attack on the chief himself. When a father beat his son so as to draw blood, and complaint was made to the chief, that father must pay the chief a cow as fine.

There were also radical changes in some of the social and cultural practices. Circumcision ceremonies were abolished. In these ceremonies, as we have already noted, young men spent many months in seclusion. It was no longer useful to have so many young able-bodied men secluded when there was need for them to go out and fight. There was also a radical change in prosecuting wars. Wars were now being fought more and more frequently. Wars also became more and more destructive and brutal. Even the old system of conducting wars was changed. People now fought in form of age-regiments. Men of the same age from all over the confederation formed one regiment and fought together. The old system where fathers and sons, elder brothers and younger brothers fought together were now abandoned. People now fought in different regiments. There was thus an attempt to integrate the whole army of the confederation. That also increased the powers of the chiefs. Nations were being born in place of tribes.

In the economic sphere, there were attempts by the chiefs to control production and trade. As soon as Dingiswayo came to power in 1775, he was said to have opened trade with the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay. He sent them 1000 oxen loads of ivory. He got blankets and beads in exchange. This trade was said to have continued under Shaka. In addition, Dingiswayo established an alliance with Maputo, a coastal chiefdom. This was to make it possible for the two chiefdoms to share the trade. Dingiswayo conquered all those Tsonga clans who settled on the Mthethwa trade route to the sea. He drafted their young men into his army. This was to remove all obstacles to his direct trade with the coast.

At the same period, the Ndwandwe under Zwide also wanted to trade with the Portuguese. Zwide tried to find an alternative route to the coast. However, the Mthethwa - Maputo alliance prevented him. In 1817, Sobhuza attacked and defeated both the Mthethwa and Maputo. He was, however, defeated by Shaka as we shall see later.

In addition to opening long-distance trade with Europeans on the coast Dingiswayo was said to have encouraged production among his people. He gave rewards to artisans who made better milk dishes, snuff spoons, laddles and other articles. He employed about 100 men in his personal craft factories. We can compare the efforts of Dingiswayo and Zwide in improving the economy of their states to those of the Asante and Dahomey kings in West Africa. Even the attempt to break the monopoly of the coastal middlemen in the trade with the Euro-

peans had a parallel. The main difference, however, was the fact that the Nguni did not sell slaves to the Europeans.

Conflicts in the northern Nguni area

At the beginning, it looked as if the three confederations in the northern Nguni area may live with one another in peace. Zwide, for example, entered into diplomatic marriages with both of his rivals. He gave his sister Ntombaza in marriage to Dingiswayo. He also gave his daughter Thandale in marriage to Sobhuza. The attempt by Zwide to have a peaceful coexistence with the other paramount chiefs did not succeed. There was soon a clash between Zwide and Sobhuza. Both of them wanted to control the fertile Phongolo valley which was good for growing maize. There followed many battles between their two armies. Finally, in 1815, Sobhuza was defeated. He led his Ngwane – Dlamini people out of the area. They went northwards to the mountainous region of what is presently Swaziland. It was there that Sobhuza laid the foundation of the Swazi nation. He died there in 1840 and was succeeded by his son; Mswazi. It was after this ruler (Mswazi) that the Ngwane – Dlamini came to be called Swazi.

After the Ngwane-Dlamini left the area, the Mthethwa and the Ndwandwe came into conflict. This was because each of them wanted to have sole control of the whole northern Nguni area. In 1817, Dingiswayo was captured by Zwide and killed.

For a short time, it looked as if Zwide was going to be the dominant figure in the whole northern Nguni area. This was because although the Mthethwa did not flee the area, they had no leader who could replace Dingiswayo. However, there soon emerged another powerful figure who not only defeated Zwide but whose activities contributed in no small measure to the spread of the crisis beyond the Nguni area. This powerful figure was Shaka, chief of the small Zulu nation whom we shall discuss in the next chapter.

Questions

1. The southern Bantu system of succession
 - A. was the most efficient in precolonial Africa
 - B. emphasised that the eldest prince should become the chief
 - C. encouraged succession disputes after the death of a chief

- D. was the same as obtained in Buganda
E. allowed women to become chiefs
2. The major occupation of the Bantu speaking people in Southern Africa was
A. hunting
B. agriculture
C. fishing and agriculture
D. agriculture and pastoralisation
E. pot-making
3. The most important and interesting cultural institution of the southern Bantu before the Nguni revolution was
A. the initiation ceremony into manhood
B. their joint work for their rulers
C. their worship of cattle
D. their mode of fighting wars
E. their marriage prohibitions among members of the same clan
4. Dingiswayo was attacked and killed in the year
A. 1513
B. 1618
C. 1718
D. 1817
E. 1900
5. Describe the ecology of South Africa.
6. What role did pastoralisation play in the life of the people of Southern Africa?
7. Discuss the social and political organisation of the southern Bantu before the Nguni revolution.
8. What were the reasons that led to the revolution in northern Nguni?
9. Outline the nature of the Nguni revolution.

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Chapter Ten

The rise of Shaka and the Mfecane: 1818-1836

Introduction

In the last chapter, we have discussed the revolution in the northern Nguni region. We stated that Shaka not only improved on the reforms started by Dingiswayo and others, but also added some of his own. In fact it was the activities of Shaka, more than anybody else which contributed to the Mfecane.

In this chapter we shall examine the rise of Shaka and discuss his radical reforms. We shall also discuss the death of Shaka and the rule of his immediate successors. Finally we shall discuss the Mfecane and its impact on the history of South Africa.

The rise of Shaka

Zululand was one of the many chiefdoms which recognised the rule of Dingiswayo. The Zulu sub-group of the Nguni numbered only about two thousand in the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was to this group that Shaka was born in about 1787. His mother was Nandi from the Langani sub-group. His father was Senzangakona, chief of the Zulu people. Shaka was said to have been born an illegitimate child. This was because Senzangakona did not pay the necessary Loloba before Shaka was born. Later, however, the marriage was recognised when Senzangakona paid the required cattle. He then took Nandi and baby Shaka to his palace. Later on, Nandi was said to have offended Senzangakona and she was driven back to her people. She took Shaka, who was a few years old, with her. They went back to her Langani relatives. Shaka was said to have spent a very unpleasant childhood. His playmates mocked him about his being born an illegitimate child. They were also never tired of reminding him of the shameful offence of his mother which led to their being driven away by his father. Scholars say these humiliations which he received during his childhood helped to shape the character of Shaka in later

life. On the other hand, Shaka grew to love his mother very dearly.

When Shaka was about 16 years old, Nandi took him to the Mthethwa. They were said to be her distant relatives. Shaka was employed as a shepherd boy until he was about 22 years old. He was then conscripted into the army of Dingiswayo. The latter, we have already noted, was the chief of the Mthethwa. He was also one of the initial leading reformers in the Nguni region. Shaka proved to be a very courageous young man. He also had brilliant military ideas. He soon rose to become a commander of one of Dingiswayo's regiments. It was while serving Dingiswayo that Shaka got his military training. He also learnt all the other reforms of Dingiswayo.

Chief Senzangakona, Shaka's father, died in about 1816. Shaka's half-brother, Sijugana succeeded their father as the chief of the Zulu. With the help of Dingiswayo, Shaka was able to kill Sijugana and become the Zulu chief. He recognised Dingiswayo as his overlord.

During the conflict between Zwide and Dingiswayo, Shaka refused to be involved. However, when Dingiswayo was killed towards the end of 1817, we saw that his Mthethwa became leaderless. This gave Shaka the opportunity to bring the larger Mthethwa confederation under his small Zulu chieftom.

Below are some of Shaka's most important reforms. We should note, however, that Shaka did not invent all the reforms. In many cases, he adopted or improved on what others had already done. Secondly, we should also note that Shaka had already started some of his reforms and conquests even before the death of Dingiswayo.

Shaka's military reforms

Shaka maintained the age regiments in the army. All able-bodied men and women below the age of 40 were conscripted. Men fought the wars. Women were employed as gardeners. They also supplied food and beer in the military camps. In addition, all the young men and women of the conquered peoples were conscripted. Shaka divided the army into age regiments. These regiments were spread throughout the kingdom. Each regiment of men and women of the same age were placed in a barrack. There was a barrier between the huts of the warriors and those of the women. Shaka came to have about 15 regiments. His army was so large that he could commit about 40,000 men into battle.

Each regiment was under its officers and one or more of Shaka's aged female relatives. Each regiment had its own name, its peculiar

mode of dressing and its own colour exercises, for dances and for ceremonies. The soldiers were taught many new tactics of fighting. The army was well-maintained and well-fed by the state. They were well-drilled and efficient. They were always ready to go to battle. They were also trained to be hard and ruthless with the enemy. Shaka forbade his warriors to marry until they reached the age of forty.

Shaka abolished the long spear which was hurled at the enemy. He introduced a stabbing spear with a short handle. This was more efficient in close combat. Shaka also made his warriors to stop wearing the Nguni traditional leather sandals and go barefoot. This encouraged them to move more quickly. The army was supported by young men who acted as carriers of goods. The army was also accompanied by medicine men who treated those wounded in battle.

Shaka's political reforms

Shaka strengthened the powers of the Inkosi (chiefs). We have seen that he had a powerful standing army loyal to him. Ceremonies which we noted were aimed at bringing the group together were now aimed at strengthening the powers of the king. The Umkosi was now more than a first-fruit festival as we saw before. It was now aimed at protecting the ruler and his army from evil forces. This was because the chief was the 'father' of his people or as the Zulu proverb says 'the breast of the nation'. The king was now the judge, the law giver, the war leader, the distributor of land and the provider of food during the time of need.

Unlike Sobhuza or Dingiswayo, Shaka did not leave the royal families of the conquered people. Most of these were eliminated and their captured chiefdoms or clans totally incorporated into the Zulu kingdom. Members of the Zulu ruling family were appointed as rulers over the conquered territories. We have already noted that most of the youths of the conquered peoples were drafted into the Zulu army. Some of the chiefs of the larger groups were allowed to rule their people. This was done only when it was assured that they would not revolt. Shaka tolerated no challenge to his rule. He ordered all sons born to him to be murdered at birth. Dingane, his successor, not only continued with this practice, but killed all his brothers as well. Shaka and later Dingane wanted to guard themselves against rivalry of their thrones.

Shaka lived in the women enclosures of his army barracks. He, however, changed the location of the barracks from time to time. He maintained a small group of councillors. He consulted them freely

but as we have already noted, he personally made every important decision.

Shaka's social and cultural reforms

We have already noted that Shaka adopted total integration during his conquests. In the whole kingdom, the Zulu dialect became the language of the nation. Zulu traditions and cultures became that of the nation. Every inhabitant, whatever his origins, became Zulu, owing allegiance to Shaka. In this way, an area previously occupied by many autonomous chiefdoms became transformed into a single kingdom. Many groups who spoke different dialects and had different sub-cultures became moulded into a single nation. Even today, the Zulu nation with its cultural and even political identity is very much visible in South Africa. The great architect of this was Shaka.

Shaka's economic reforms

We have already noted that Shaka continued the economic reforms of Dingiswayo. He traded with the Europeans at the coast as Dingiswayo had done. Shaka was the wealthiest man in the Zulu kingdom. He owned thousands of cattle. As we noted, all cattle taken as booty belonged to the king. These were distributed among the barracks. The meat and milk of the cattle were used with the king's permission. The tusks of all elephants killed in Zulu kingdom belonged to Shaka. So were the skins of all lions killed. His royal traders sold these, especially the ivory, to Europeans. His royal smiths made the stabbing spear for every warrior.

Shaka and the Europeans

In 1824, three Englishmen arrived at Port Natal by sea. They were Francis Farewell, James King and Francis Fynn. They were accompanied by other Englishmen, Afrikaners and their coloured servants. They established an agricultural settlement there. The Afrikaners soon departed leaving the Englishmen and their coloured servants. These were later joined by other Englishmen and their coloured servants. The Englishmen engaged themselves in trading especially in ivory which they exported. They also adopted themselves to the Zulu way of life. For example, Francis Fynn became very fluent in Zulu language and married Nguni women. He travelled far and wide in modern Natal to buy ivory.

Shaka welcomed the white strangers. He was very interested in talking to them. He was also happy with some of the presents that they gave him especially the muskets. Shaka also valued their medicine. Fynn was a former assistant to a medical doctor in London so he knew something about medicine. In addition, the Europeans helped Shaka in some of his battles.

Shaka allowed the Englishmen and their followers to settle at the Port of Natal. He made it known that they were his white people. This meant that they were safe to move throughout the Zulu kingdom. In addition, they were to be given food and shelter whenever they needed them. In fact they were treated as Shaka's subordinate chiefs. The Englishmen had even a document in which Shaka was said to have ceded a large part of Natal to them in 1824. We know that although Shaka put his mark on the document, he never intended to give away his land to the whitemen.

As we have already noted, the Europeans accompanied Shaka in some of his campaigns. In 1826, Fynn accompanied him during his campaign against the Ndwandwe whom Shaka defeated. On the way back, Shaka sent a detachment against the Kumalo. However, Shaka's army failed to conquer them. Shaka then invited the Europeans to help him. They agreed, and early in 1827, the European traders used their sticks which 'spit fire', i.e. muskets to defeat the Kumalo. Fynn and Farewell advised Shaka not to attack the frontier districts of the Cape Colony so as not to clash with the European government at the coast and he agreed. Thus there was no clash between Shaka and the Europeans at Cape Town.

While discussing Buganda, we noted that Kabaka Mutesa in 1879, sent his ambassadors to Queen Victoria of England. In fact much earlier than that, Shaka had also tried to do the same thing. In 1828, Shaka sent an embassy to King George IV of England. The embassy was led by James King and it included Chief Sotobe. However, Shaka's embassy did not go very far. The Governor of Cape Town ordered it to be prevented. In that same year, as we shall examine later, Shaka was assassinated. Maybe if he had lived longer, he would have attempted to send another embassy.

The conquests of Shaka

We have already mentioned some of Shaka's conquests. We noted that he had started his conquests even before the death of Dingiswayo. Shaka's conquests lasted from 1817 to 1828.

Shaka attempted to bring all the groups in the region of northern Nguni under his control. This brought him in conflict with Zwide's

Ndwendwe, the only other powerful chiefdom in the area. In 1819, Shaka defeated Zwide after two major battles. This led to the collapse of the Ndwendwe confederacy. In the early 1820s, Shaka turned his forces southwards and attacked the small chiefdoms in Pondoland. He also attacked the northern Thembu of Ngoza driving them south into Natal. In 1822, he attacked the Hlubi and the Matiwa. He also sent his general called Mzilikazi against the Sotho. In 1826, Shaka led his army in a major campaign against the Ndwendwe. The latter, although defeated earlier, revived again under a new leader called Sikhunyana. The Ndwendwe were finally broken. Shaka also defeated the Kumalo with the help of the Europeans in 1827.

In 1828, Shaka sent his army further southwards. That brought them to the borders of the Cape Colony. In August of that year, the Governor of Cape Colony sent a strong army against those of Shaka. However, there was no fight since by the time the Governor's army arrived, the Zulu warriors had withdrawn. Before the army could rest, Shaka sent them northwards to attack Soshangane. The latter, was one of the generals of Zwide who fled there. However, Soshangane drove away Shaka's army. The Zulu army turned back home. They were hungry, many were ill with fever and all were exhausted. By the time the army reached home, Shaka had been assassinated.

The death of Shaka

From the beginning of his reign, Shaka was said to be more autocratic than the traditional Nguni chiefs. He often ignored the advice of his councillors. He did not tolerate opposition. He did not hesitate to kill all who opposed him. He gradually became isolated from the people. He asked his followers to do many things which did not please them. For example, when Nandi, his mother died, in 1827, Shaka declared a one-year mourning. During this period, he ordered that no milk was to be taken. No woman was to become pregnant. People found without tears in their eyes were punished. Many were said to have been killed.

Finally, a plot to assassinate Shaka was hatched by members of his own family. At the centre of the plot was Mkabayi, a full sister of Shaka's father. She enlisted the cooperation of Shaka's half brothers, Dingane and Mhlangana. They also had the cooperation of Mbopha, Shaka's principal servant. On 24 September 1828, they slew Shaka.

Successors of Shaka

After killing Shaka, the assassins fought among themselves for the

throne. Dingane finally killed Mhlangana and became king. He ruled from 1828 to 1839. His first action was to replace all officers who were loyal to Shaka with his own men. Dingane was not a warrior. He lacked many qualities of Shaka which we have examined. The army gradually became weak. However, Dingane sent the army on annual expeditions against Zulu enemies. Many of these expeditions were failures. Dingane's prestige began to decline at home and among the neighbouring states.

Dingane, throughout his reign was faced with many problems. One of such was that the population of Europeans kept increasing. This was brought about by the Mfecane which we shall examine later. By 1835, there were about 30 whitemen and 2,500 of their African followers at the Port of Natal. Very soon more Europeans came during the Great Trek which we shall examine in another chapter. The increase in the population of the Europeans was gradually leading to a clash between Dingane and the Europeans who wanted the land. There were several temporary agreements which both Dingane and the Europeans broke later. There were several clashes between them. Finally in 1838-9, there were bloody clashes which ended up on the 30 January 1839, with a serious defeat inflicted on Dingane. He was eventually captured and killed.

The Europeans appointed Mpande, King of the Zulu. He was however, to be a vassal of the Afrikaner Republic of Natal. Mpande was Dingane's half brother. We noted that like Shaka, Dingane also killed all his sons at birth. He also killed most of his brothers. He however spared Mpande because he thought Mpande was not a serious rival. He allowed him to be chief of Echowe. But Mpande too was jealous of Dingane and he also wanted to rule. In the conflict between Dingane and the Afrikaners, Mpande led his 17,000 Zulu followers with 25,000 cattle to the side of the Europeans. The Europeans were able to benefit from the succession dispute of the Zulu nation and so defeated it. We saw that the factor also contributed to the European conquest of the caliphate of Alhaji Umaru in West Africa.

Mpande was the King of the Zulu from 1839 to 1872. He tried as much as possible not to offend the Europeans. There were less wars. Zulu kingdom recovered. The population increased and there were more cattle. Many Zulu came to accept their permanent membership of the Zulu nation. When Mpande died in 1872, he was succeeded by one of his sons, Getshwayo.

At the time when Getshwayo became king, the Zulu kingdom was the most powerful African state in what is today South Africa. Getshwayo was a good ruler. He was very intelligent and he consulted

was only surpassed by the Great Trek which we shall examine in another chapter.

It was the revolution in northern Nguniland which led to the Mfecane. It was the revolution which encouraged large-scale destructive wars. In fact, without the sort of warfare employed especially by Shaka, his contemporaries and successors, the events which we now know as Mfecane would not have gone beyond northern Nguniland.

Nature of Mfecane

We have noted that the revolution in northern Nguniland became noticeable during the era of the rule of Sobhuza, Zwide and Dingiswayo. The revolution, we pointed out, was further consolidated and perfected by Shaka. We have also outlined some of the conquests of Shaka. We also saw that during the conquests, most of the defeated warriors were killed. Many of the ruling families of the defeated people were also killed. Young men of the defeated peoples were conscripted into Shaka's regiments. Young women were forcefully taken as wives and concubines. Cattle and grain of the conquered peoples were equally confiscated. Finally the conquered peoples were absorbed into the ever expanding kingdom of Shaka.

Many warriors who were defeated by Shaka, however, fled their homes. Most of these were small groups who lost most of their young men and women as well as their cattle. This forced all the fleeing groups to incorporate a great number of aliens whom they met on their way. This was in order to build strong military and political forces which were their only guarantee for survival. They also needed to confiscate the cattle of those they met on their way. Cattle, as we have already noted, had social and economic significance to the Nguni and Sotho speaking peoples. Since the fleeing groups had little time for farming, they also looted the grains and other foodstuff of those they found. In most cases they also wanted to be the rulers over the groups which they met. This means that they needed to confiscate land from their original owners. They would then drive them away or impose vassalhood on them.

No group of people would voluntarily allow themselves to be annihilated or have their young men and women taken away by strangers or allow their lands and wealth to be confiscated. In most cases, therefore, there were endless conflicts with those defeated losing almost everything to the victors. Some of those who were defeated, in turn fled their homes. Most of the fleeing groups adopted the Nguni military and political reforms. These included fighting

with the short-stabbing spear; total destruction of the enemy, and absorbing the youths of the defeated enemy. Within a period of 35 years, the impact of Mfecane was felt over two thousand miles from its original home in northern Nguniland.

The effects of Mfecane

The effects of Mfecane are many. Some of them good but others not. Let us outline some of the most important ones.

Population movement

One of the impacts of the Mfecane was the movement of peoples from their homes to settle in other areas. In 1965, there were more than seven million Nguni speakers. They were scattered all over South Africa. There were also some Nguni speakers. There were also some Nguni groups in modern Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Mozambique. Before the Mfecane, the Nguni, as we have already noted, were confined to the area of what is now Natal. The Sotho in 1965, were said to number above five million speakers. Like the Nguni, the Sotho are also scattered throughout South Africa. Before the Mfecane, the Sotho speakers were confined to the area between the Limpopo and the Orange River, north and west of Drakensberg while women were found on the upper reaches of the Limpopo. The Tsonga were dislodged from their original homes and driven westwards.

As people moved, they also moved with their cultures. This was more particular with the Nguni who succeeded in imposing themselves as rulers in many of the areas they moved to. Nguni language and culture was spread far and wide by the Mfecane. In addition, there were numerous inter-marriages between groups which led to the birth of nations as we shall examine further below.

The rise of new states

Another effect of the Mfecane was the rise of new states in Southern Africa. In fact some of these could be called nation-states. Some of them not only survived the Mfecane but also survived colonialism and are still existing. We have already discussed the Zulu kingdom. We shall examine some of the others below.

Swazi kingdom

We noted that when Sobhuza was defeated, he fled Nguniland leading his Ngwane-Dlamini peoples northwards. They attacked all

those who stood on their way; absorbing young men and women and confiscating cattle and grain. Sobhuza finally brought his people to the mountainous region of what is today's Swaziland. Here he conquered many groups, the majority of whom were Sotho. He founded the kingdom of Ngwane-Dlamini.

Sobhuza, unlike Shaka, did not destroy all the ruling families of the people he conquered. He allowed all those who recognised his rule to remain as chiefs of their peoples. Nevertheless, all the young men were absorbed into his age-regiments. Sobhuza also tried to maintain peace with his powerful neighbours. He was said to have sent a tribute of young girls including a princess to Shaka. When Sobhuza died in 1840, he was succeeded by his son, Mswazi. It was after the latter that the Ngwane-Dlamini people came to be called Swazi. The new king continued with his father's policies. He married girls from many of the ruling groups of the conquered peoples. He also gave many of their members royal princesses in marriage. The example set by Mswazi was followed by his followers. There were large-scale inter-group marriages in the kingdom. Eventually ethnic differences greatly disappeared and a truly Swazi nation-state was born. The kingdom is still surviving.

Gaza kingdom

When Shaka defeated Zwide in 1820, some of his generals fled northwards, each leading some few followers. One of these generals was Soshangane who finally established himself in the country of the Tsonga, not very far from Delagoa Bay in modern Mozambique. His regiments were sent in all directions attacking people, capturing young men and women as well as cattle and grains. He established a kingdom which he called Gaza. The Gaza state included parts of present day Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Soshangane took control of the booming trade between the Portuguese on the coast and the peoples of the interior. We noted that this trade was formerly dominated by the Tsonga and that it was a subject of motivation for the Nguni revolution. Like the Asante and the Aja states in West Africa, Soshangane forced the Portuguese at the coast to pay tribute to him.

Unlike the Zulu and the Swazi, for example, a Gaza nation did not emerge. Sobhuza did not integrate the youths of the captured people into his age-regiments. He kept them apart. There was also discrimination against the conquered majority by the ruling Nguni. The Gaza state was finally destroyed by the Portuguese.

Jero Ngoni kingdom

Zwangendaba, another general of Zwide led his followers who came to be called Ngoni into central Africa. In a period of about 20 years he had led his followers on a journey of some two thousand miles from their northern Nguniland to Central Africa. He established his kingdom between lake Malawi and lake Tanganyika.

After the death of Zwangendaba, the Jero Ngoni state split into several factions. Some of these penetrated into what are today, Zimbabwe and Tanzania to carry on the Mfecane.

The Ndebele kingdom

Mzilikazi was a grandson of Zwide. He was made chief of the Khumalo, a small Nguni chiefdom in 1818. He later became a general of Shaka who sent him on an expedition against a neighbouring Sotho group in 1822. Mzilikazi, however, refused to hand over to Shaka the cattle which he captured during the attack. He fled home to escape Shaka's punishment. He led his followers who came to be called Ndebele for over 1500 miles to modern Zimbabwe. On the way, he fought many battles, destroying some chiefdoms, absorbing youths and confiscating cattle. By 1827 Mzilikazi's kingdom had become the most powerful and the richest in the Sotho – Tswana and Shona countries. In about 1837, Mzilikazi built his headquarters at Bulawayo in what is now Zimbabwe.

★ The Lesotho kingdom

This kingdom or new state was born out of the Mfecane. The state was built by Moshoeshoe was the son of a village Sotho chief. Moshoeshoe organised and brought together several small autonomous Sotho communities scattered widely over the plains stretching north and west of the Drakensberg mountains. He employed horses and guns instead of stabbing spears in his wars. Moshoeshoe established the capital of this kingdom on top of a mountain. This made it easier to defend against enemies. Many of the Sotho and Tswana groups who were dislodged by the Mfecane came to Lesotho. Like Sobhuza, Moshoeshoe tried to be friendly with his powerful neighbours by sending them tribute. He, however, raided all the neighbouring areas. He placed his brothers and later his sons as supervisors of the conquered territories.

In 1833, Moshoeshoe welcomed European missionaries into his kingdom. He allowed them to preach to his people and permitted those who wanted to be converted. This included members of the

ruling family. However, like Kabaka Mutesa, Moshoeshoe flirted with Christianity but declined to be converted. And like Shaka, he made it clear that the missionaries were his whitemen and utterly depended on his goodwill.

Moshoeshoe later on clashed with the Boers who wanted to take over his kingdom. He also pleaded with Britain to annex his country. He did that to prevent its annexation by the Boer Republic of Orange Free State. Moshoeshoe died in March 1870. The kingdom he created survived to this date.

There were many other states which were created as a result of the Mfecane but the above examples should be enough to give us a good picture. Some of the states survived as we have noted. Other states later disappeared.

4 Destruction of old states

As we have already noted, the Mfecane led to the destruction of many of the old states which existed before. In fact, most of the old states among the Nguni, Sotho, Venda and Tsonga were destroyed, many of their former ruling families killed. The Mfecane also contributed to the destruction of other states outside the region. For example, the Gaza and the Ngoni states helped to destroy the remains of the famous Nwanamotapa empire.

The emergence of the Mfengu

Mfengu is derived from the Bantu word *Ukefunguza* which means 'begging'. It is used to refer to the poor people who arrived in the Cape Colony and adopted the career of begging for food and shelter from one place to another. These were thousands of people who after they were uprooted from their homes wandered aimlessly. They were destitute, poor and hungry. Even if they moved in a group, they lacked leaders. The Mfengu began to drift southwards into the Cape Colony area at the start of Mfecane. Their numbers continued to rise as the Mfecane progressed.

At first, the Mfengu, most of whom were from northern Nguniland, were warmly received by the southern Nguni chiefs. They received them kindly, give them land, food and cattle. In a short time, many of the Mfengu prospered. However, the Mfengu were never assimilated by their hosts.

The missionaries backed by the British government at the Cape Colony encouraged disagreements between the Mfengu and their hosts. This was because the Europeans wanted to take the lands of the cape Nguni. In May 1835, about 16000 Mfengu accompanied by 15000

cattle and thousands of goats left their Xhosa hosts and crossed to the British-controlled territory. They were escorted by British troops in a trek that took them about one week. The Mfengu banded themselves to the Europeans. About 500 of them joined the British army. They were used by the British in fighting the Xhosa who were driven away from their homes and their lands taken.

The arrival of the Mfengu solved the labour shortage among the Europeans. They were employed as farm labourers, messengers, cooks, servants etc. The result of this was to further entrench the relationship of master and servant between the Europeans and blacks. Before Mfecane and especially before the Mfengu emerged, there was an element of equality between the two races.

Reduction of African population

One of the negative impacts of the Mfecane was that it led to a great reduction of the African population in Southern Africa. Not only were people forced to flee their homes but thousands as we have already noted, were killed during the conflicts. This gave the Boers more opportunities to attack the Africans and take over their lands.

Empty spaces

As the Mfecane led to the movement as well as reduction of populations in Southern Africa, it also led to 'open' or 'empty' spaces in some areas. This gave another welcomed opportunity to the Boer farmers who now encroached upon African lands as we shall examine in the next chapter.

Questions

1. Shaka was assassinated by his people because
 - A. he was friendly with the Europeans
 - B. he killed all babies born to him
 - C. he was a despot who gradually became feared and hated
 - D. he had started losing battles against the enemies
 - E. he refused to give his warriors some of the cattle which were captured from the enemy
2. Mfecane was caused by
 - A. the 'divide and rule' tactics of the Europeans

- B. the revolution in northern Nguniland
 - C. droughts and long famines in Southern Africa
 - D. love of adventures by the Nguni people
 - E. the attempt by the Zulu people to dominate all others
3. Match the kings with the states they established
- A. Moshoeshoe Gaza
 - B. Zwangendaba Ndebele
 - C. Sobhuza Lesotho
 - D. Mzilikazi Ngoni
 - E. Soshangane Swazi
4. Mfengu allied with the Europeans against their southern Nguni hosts because
- A. they were discriminated against by their hosts
 - B. the Europeans promised to give them jobs and shelter
 - C. they were afraid that Mfecane would come again
 - D. they were encouraged by the Europeans to see their hosts as enemies
 - E. their southern Nguni hosts were confiscating their cattle
5. The groups which more than any other felt the impact of the Mfecane were the
- A. Shona and Zulu
 - B. Zulu and Ndebele
 - C. Nguni and Sotho
 - D. Xhosa and Mthethwa
 - E. Ndwandwe and Zulu
6. Getshwayo was banished from his kingdom by the British because
- A. he fought long wars with them
 - B. his people loved him
 - C. he was attempting to revive the socio-political structures of the Zulu kingdom
 - D. he refused to be converted to Christianity
 - E. he was opposed to the colonisation of his kingdom
7. Moshoeshoe did not adopt the usual short-stabbing spear in his conquests because
- A. his Sotho followers did not master the use of the weapon

- B. he considered the use of the weapon a cruel act on the enemies
 - C. he relied more on horses and guns in warfare
 - D. the weapon was not available in the area where he established his kingdom
 - E. he was not a military leader
8. Discuss some of the reforms of Shaka
9. What do you understand by Mfecane?
10. What were the effects of the Mfecane?

Further reading

Mashingeidje, E K, 'The impact of the Mfecane on the Cape Colony', in J F Ade Ajayi (ed.) *UNESCO General History of Africa*, Vol. VI, Africa in the nineteenth century, Heinemann International, 1989

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Chapter Eleven

The frontier wars and the British occupation of the Cape Colony

Introduction

We have seen how the revolution in northern Nguniland led to the Mfecane. By the time the Mfecane started, Europeans who were settled at the Cape region had been having more than a century of conflicts with the Africans whom they found in the area. These wars took place along the frontiers that separated the white settlements from those of the Africans. This was why they were called frontier wars.

In this chapter, we shall examine the origins of the European settler communities in South Africa; the origins and nature of the Frontier Wars; and the British colonisation of the Cape region.

Origins and early development of European settlement in the Cape region

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to have had contact with South Africa. In 1488, Portuguese sailing ships under the command of Batholomew Diaz rounded what came to be known as the Cape of Good Hope. From then onwards, the Cape was visited frequently by ships of several European countries on their way to the Far East. It was, however, the Dutch who were the earlier Europeans to establish themselves permanently in South Africa.

The first European settlement was a call or refreshment station which was established at Table Bay. In those days, most long journeys were undertaken by ship. These depended on favourable wind to travel. Sailing was generally slow; it took about seven months or more for ships to make the journey between Europe and the countries in the Far East. Ships needed to break their journey in order to obtain fresh supplies of water, vegetables, fruits and meat. Those who were ill

were treated. Both the sailors and their passengers went ashore to rest. The Cape region was found suitable for a call-station to be established there.

The Khoikhoi who occupied the region had cattle and sheep which could supply meat to the ships. In addition, the Cape region had a temperate climate which was suitable for the growth of fruits and vegetables favoured by Europeans.

On 4 June 1652, three ships docked at Table Bay. 90 Dutchmen and 40 women under the leadership of Jan Van Riebeck disembarked. They were sent there by the Dutch East India Company to establish a call-station for the use of the Company's ships which sailed between Europe and the Far East. In the period of ten years when he ruled the area on behalf of the Company, Van Riebeck succeeded in building a fort at Table Bay. The settlement contained houses, a hospital, a mill, a corn store and stables for cattle, sheep and horses. There were also fruits and vegetable gardens near the fort. This initial settlement continued to be expanded over the years due to more immigrations and natural reproduction. It continued to be ruled by the official of the Dutch East India Company until it was taken over by Britain.

The white settlers began to face many problems soon after their arrival. In the beginning they were able to obtain some cattle and sheep from the Khoikhoi in exchange for tobacco, brass wire and copper bars. Soon after their arrival, Riebeck came to own about 200 cattle and 600 sheep on behalf of the Company. The number was, however, found to be inadequate. This was because in addition to the needs of the Company, the settlers themselves needed supplies of meat and other products. But the Khoikhoi, as we have already known, were always reluctant to part with their cattle. To have enough meat and other dairy products, therefore, the white settlers were forced to start breeding their own stock. In addition to this the settlers were also expected to grow their own foodcrops. This posed a problem. Not only was the white population small but most of them had no experience in farming. This meant that foodstuff like rice and wheat had to be imported, an action which the Company disapproved since the white settlement was expected to be self-sufficient. What was needed, therefore, was more people who could do the stock-breeding and farming. In addition, there was also the need for more people who could do other jobs like carpentry, building, wood-cutting and bricklaying. The San and the Khoikhoi were, at the beginning, reluctant in accepting to be employed by the white settlers.

To improve the situation, three things were needed: more land in order to grow more foodstuff and raise stocks, capital in form of money and equipment and people who could supply the needed

labour. The question of capital was not solved for a very long time. Many of the white settlers remained poor and unhappy. Some of them resorted to drunkenness to enable them forget their misery. At the beginning, there was no problem in acquiring land. There was what looked like vast, empty land adjoining the settlement. It was only the Company which was at first opposed to the rapid expansion of the white settlement. This was because the larger the settlement, the more money needed to spend on its administration and defence. The Company was however persuaded to allow more people to own land, thus becoming free burghers or Boers (farmers). In 1657, nine employees of the Company were released from service. Each of them was allocated land in order to farm and raise stock. However, as their number increased, the white settlers kept on demanding for more land. It was this question of the demand for more land by the whites which eventually led to the frontier wars as we shall examine below.

Several methods were employed in an effort to increase the number of people who supplied the needed labour to the white settlement. Those civil servants who still worked for the Company were allowed to hire their services to the Boers during their free time. At the same time, more Europeans were encouraged to migrate and settle in the Cape region. Not many immigrants came during the seventeenth century. It was only in 1688 that about 200 Huguenot refugees arrived. These were Calvinist Protestant Christians who were forced to flee from France due to the persecutions they received from the Catholic dominated government.

Before the Huguenot refugees arrived, however, the white settlers had already decided that what they needed most was slave labour and not white immigration. The Company itself owned hundreds of slaves. It was thus easily persuaded to allow the Boers to import slaves. The first shipment of slaves arrived from Angola and West Africa between 1658 and 1659. Later on, especially in the eighteenth century, slaves were brought from Madagascar and Delagoa Bay. Some small number of slaves were also brought from India (especially Bengal), Indonesia and other Asian countries. By the end of the eighteenth century, the number of slave population at the Cape had exceeded that of the white population.

The society at the Cape Colony in the beginning of the nineteenth century

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the white settler community in South Africa had already become slave owners. The society had become stratified. At the top in the society was the free white class.

The original white settlers were of different origins: Dutch, French, German and others. However, by the end of the eighteenth century, they had inter-married with one another on a large scale. The Dutch were still the majority and the administration of the colony was still Dutch. Thus, most of the white settlers adopted the Dutch language as well as the custom and religion of the Dutch people. The majority saw themselves as farmers (Boers) even if what they actually did was not directly farming. Nevertheless, there were actual farmers (*arkerboere*) who were in the majority. There were also pastoralists (*trekboer*) who moved from one area to another grazing their cattle and sheep. There were of course white employees of the Company as well as those who were engaged in other occupations like trading and wine selling. As far back as 1685, for example, most of the 30 families which populated Cape Town were engaged in keeping houses where travellers obtained lodging and refreshments of a fee.

There were also white servants (*knechts*) belonging to the Company and to the Boers. These were lower in society status than the other members of the white population. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the community of white settlers in South Africa had come to see themselves as permanent settlers in Africa. This was why they named themselves and their language *Afrikaner* i.e. African. Members of the white class were free to marry, to own property and to leave such property to their children. They had also the right to bring, or to defend, their cases in a court of law.

Next to the white freemen were the domestic slaves many of who were Mulatos. These were the artisans who built the houses, the carpenters, fishermen, boat makers, armed guards and many others. Some of these were allowed to regain their freedom upon conversion to Christianity and or loyal service to their masters. Below the domestic slaves came the farm or plantation slaves. These were the lowest members of the society. The majority in this category of slaves were Africans. Their rights as human beings were very limited. They had only the right to eat, sleep and cohabit. They had also the right not to be killed unless there was a reason for it. They received the most inhuman treatment. Those who tried to escape were given very severe punishment often leading to their death.

At the beginning of the white settlement, there was some form of tolerance between the races. There were inter-marriages between the white men and the Khoikhoi women. In 1685, inter-marriage between the whites and the blacks were officially prohibited. This of course did not end relations between the races which continued illegally. In fact this was mainly the way the *Afrikaner* speaking coloured peoples or half-castes (Mulatos) of the Cape region were produced. By the

beginning of the nineteenth century, the white settlers had already developed a feeling of superiority over the Africans. They felt that they had the right to own African slaves. They also felt that they had the right to do whatever they wanted with their slaves and their descendants.

The origin and nature of the frontier wars

The most important reason that led to the frontier wars was the insatiable desire of the Boers to acquire more land which belonged to the Africans. The resistance of the latter led to the frontier wars. The white settlers needed more land for many reasons. Many areas at the Cape had poor soil and so were not good for farming. In the succeeding years, the population kept on increasing. By 1700, the Cape could no longer absorb more people. In addition, the law of inheritance required that when a man died his property was divided equally among all his sons. This meant that as families grew, the farms at the Cape area were no longer able to cope.

In addition to the scarcity of fertile land at the Cape, there also came to be some demand of wheat from South Africa in the Dutch Asian colonies. This was more especially from the 1750s to about 1784. With many slaves who supplied the needed labour, the Boers found this was a good opportunity to improve their economy. To produce more wheat, the Boers needed more land. By the late eighteenth century, the Boers came to assume that all whites were entitled to as much land as they wanted. Younger sons were provided with a few heads of cattle and a wagon and encouraged to seek land elsewhere away from the settlement. A man could lay claim to as much as 6000 acres of land. He only needed to ensure that the said land was not too close to another white farmer's homestead. He also needed to pay an insignificant annual fee to the Company in recognition of its rule. Once he did that, the land belonged to him and he could bequeath it to his descendants.

However, as soon as the Khoikhoi and the San realised that the whites were encroaching on their ancestral lands, they reacted. In 1658-60 and 1673-7, there were major wars between the Khoikhoi and the white settlers. The Khoikhoi were continuously defeated, killed or driven away from their homes. Their cattle were confiscated. As if that was not enough, the Khoikhoi were also afflicted by epidemics. For example in 1713, there was a major epidemic of smallpox which considerably reduced the number of the Khoikhoi. By the end of the eighteenth century, the major resistance of the Khoikhoi was broken although there continued to be conflicts between them and the white

settlers. Many Khoikhoi were subsequently employed by the whitemen as servants or armed guards.

It was, however, at the time when the main resistance of the Khoikhoi was being brought under control that the white settlers started to engage tougher enemies. These were the San. The latter, we have already observed, were principally hunters who moved from one place to another. They, however, had the concept of territory within which each band roamed and hunted. The San did not welcome any intrusion into their territories. The Boers were not only attempting to take over the territories of the San but they were also killing or driving away game with their firearms.

In about 1700 Khoikhoi servants of the Boers were surprised to note that their herds were being attacked by poisoned arrows. At that time the boundary of the white settlement was at the Berg river. It was later discovered that the attacks were by the San. Not only did they kill the cattle of the white settlers but sometimes they also carried them away. The commandos of the white settlers and their armed Khoikhoi servants were organised to fight the San. The clashes between the San and the white frontiersmen were fiercer than those with the Khoikhoi. For example, in 1774, about 250 armed commandos under the command of G R Opperman attacked the San. They killed about 500 San and took about 250 as prisoners. However, at other times, the San were also successful. Many white settlers were forced to abandon their settlements at the frontier due to the constant harassments of the San. Despite these temporary successes, it was a losing battle for both the San and the Khoikhoi. The Boers continued to advance their frontier. The San and the Khoikhoi who resisted were killed or enslaved. Others were driven further into the interior.

While the white frontier was being expanded westwards against the territories of the San and the Khoikhoi, other Boers were also moving eastwards. As in the western frontier, the trekboers in the eastern frontier were also seeking hunting and grazing land. This brought them into clashes with the Xhosa. The Xhosa were better organised than the San and the Khoikhoi. They, as all Bantu groups which we have already examined, had chiefs with authority. In addition, the Xhosa were sedentary people who were also in need of land for farming, grazing and hunting. Thus both the Boers and the Xhosa had similar interests. In addition, while the Boers were expanding eastwards, the Xhosa were also expanding southwestwards. This was due to the population expansion among the Bantu which led to the revolution in Nguni land. The Xhosa were part of the southern Nguni peoples, others included the Xosha and the Thembu.

Thus, it was inevitable that the Boers and the southern Nguni

peoples had to clash. Several wars were fought between the southern Nguni and the whitemen. It was, however, the Xhosa who bore the brunt of more clashes with the Boers. The Xhosa suffered a series of defeats. Time after time, their huts were burnt, their cattle captured and their fields devastated. In 1781, for example, the Xhosa were driven out of their homes in eastern Suurveld. This was achieved through treachery. Andrian Van Jaarsveld, the leader of the white soldiers scattered tobacco on the ground. He knew that the Xhosa loved tobacco. But while a group of Xhosa were picking the tobacco, Jaarsveld gave orders to open fire on them. Most of the Xhosa in that group were killed. In that year alone, about 5500 cattle were captured from the Xhosa by the Boers.

The Xhosa, however, fought back. For example, in the same 1781, the Boers claimed to have lost 65,327 cattle, 11,000 sheep and 200 horses to the Xhosa. The Xhosa initially followed the pre-revolution Bantu warfare. In this type of warfare, as we have already examined, women and children were not attacked. The attack was mainly on soldiers and property. Missionaries, since they did not carry arms, were also always spared by the Xhosa. The Boers on the other hand caught women and children of the defeated Xhosa and employed them as slaves. After 1800, all Xhosa who refused to give up their land were shot. Their houses burnt and their cattle seized. No prisoners were taken. The wounded and the weak were left to die.

The response of the government of the Company to the frontier wars

Successive governments of the Dutch East Africa Company sought to limit contacts between the Xhosa and the trekboers. This was in order to prevent the frontier wars which were costly in men and resources. Another reason why the Company sought to prevent contacts between the Xhosa and the Boers was economic. The company wanted to maintain its monopoly of the cattle trade. It was, therefore, opposed to bartering Xhosa cattle by the Boers. In 1737, private cattle barter with the Xhosa was prohibited. In 1774, a Boer was even imprisoned for bartering cattle with the Xhosa. An order was given that all Xhosa cattle with the Boers were to be handed over to the government. However, trade between the Xhosa and the Boers still continued.

In order to avoid conflicts, the Boers were forbidden to settle east of the Gamtos. When this did not work, boundary marks were fixed in 1778 on the orders of Governor Plettenberg. No whiteman was to cross the boundary marks. The governor also met Xhosa chiefs and warned them not to move west of the boundary marks. This, the

Xhosa refused to accept since they considered the area their ancestral lands. Thus, by the time the British took over the government of South Africa, there had been several conflicts between the Boers and the Xhosa along their frontiers.

The British occupation of the Cape region

In 1795, Britain occupied the white settlement at the Cape. This followed conflicts in Europe in which Britain defeated and occupied Netherlands. Britain then sought to occupy all important colonies of Netherlands. The Cape region, we have already noted, was a colony of the Company of Netherlands. The Dutch authorities at the Cape put in some resistance but they were defeated. Nevertheless, opposition to British rule remained for a long time at the frontiers.

The British occupied the Cape Colony at the time when crisis was brewing there. The Boer frontiersmen were already complaining of the inability of the Cape government to deal with the opposition of the Xhosa and the San. The Boers were also opposed to the attempt by Company officials to prevent them from forcing the captured Xhosa women and children to be their servants. The Boers were also opposed to the practice of white offenders being arrested by black guards. The Boers were also opposed to the Chinese, Javanese and white convicts living among them or competing in businesses with them. But before Britain could look into the grievances of the white frontiersmen, there followed a serious invasion of the Xhosa followed by the rising of the San. This forced the British to withdraw from South Africa in 1803.

In 1806, however, Britain again invaded and retook the Cape Colony. This time, the British authorities came with the intention of permanent occupation. This was because of the strategic location and commercial potential of the colony. Britain, however, faced a number of problems. The Boers were a different group of Europeans from the British. They spoke a different language. They followed a different system of law. They belonged to a different religious denomination. In addition to all these, there were the frontier wars which still defied any solution.

British reforms between 1806 and 1835

In the early nineteenth century when it re-occupied the Cape, Britain's colonial policy was to people her colonies with British subjects. This was to help in imposing the British image on the colonies. It was

also meant to help in consolidating British laws and customs in the colonies.

In addition to the above general colonial policies, other considerations helped to shape British Colonial Policy in South Africa. As we have noted, there were insecure frontiers. In 1819, for example, Makanda, a diviner, led about 10,000 Xhosa warriors who attacked Graham Town, a white frontier settlement. On the other hand, this was a period when Britain was having problems at home. There was much unemployment in Britain. There was also a growing demand in Britain for the reduction of the money being spent on the army. This was of course indirectly calling for the reduction of the army. With this background, we can now understand what contributed to the British reforms in South Africa in the early nineteenth century. Now, let us outline the reforms.

One of the reforms was to encourage the immigration of British nationals into South Africa. Very soon after Britain re-occupied the region a substantial number of British people settled in Cape Town, the then capital. For example, in 1817, Benjamin Moodies was said to have arrived in South Africa with 50 Scottish labourers most of whom stayed in Cape Town. In the same year, Lord Charles Somerset, the Governor of the Cape began to urge for the settlement of British subjects at the eastern frontier. In 1818, the British government offered to transport free of charge, all British people who wanted to immigrate to South Africa. In addition, any man who agreed to immigrate would be given 100 acres of land and some monetary help. In response to this, some 4000 British settlers arrived at the Cape in early 1820. They included farmers, artisans, soldiers, medical and clerical men. Another 1000 soon followed their foot-step. Most of the new arrivals were settled on the eastern frontier, especially at Albany.

The arrival in 1820 of British settlers doubled the English speaking population at the Cape. It led to the growth of British culture in the colony retail shops, British newspapers, horse-racing, cricket matches and debating societies. Many of the British immigrants were educated urban people. The British immigrants played an active role in founding schools and libraries in South Africa. They also helped in establishing newspapers and the spread of English literature in South Africa. However, it should be noted that the British immigrants also helped in confiscating more lands from the Africans.

The second reform was the attempt to replace Dutch with the English language in all spheres of life. English replaced Dutch as the language of administration. In addition, in 1822, Governor Somerset proclaimed that English was to replace Dutch in courts. Special incentives were given to teachers who taught English language in

schools. In the church, many posts vacated by Dutchmen were filled by Englishmen. There was an attempt to replace the Roman-Dutch legal system with the English legal system. In 1811, circuit courts were introduced. In 1819, the Crown Trial was introduced and in 1827, trial by jury was instituted. In the same year, an English Magisterial System was introduced. Thus, although the Dutch-Roman law which operated before the British occupation was not changed. The way of dispensing justice was made British.

The third British reform was the abolishing of slavery and an attempt to regulate the master-servant relationships. In Book One, we saw that in 1807, the British Parliament made slave trade illegal throughout the British empire. That took place one year after Britain had re-occupied the Cape Colony. In subsequent years, efforts were made to abolish slavery itself throughout the British empire. A law was passed in December 1833 which set slaves throughout the empire free. It was, however, in 1838 when the emancipation of slaves was completed.

At the same time, efforts were also made to improve the conditions of the coloured people who were servants of the whitemen. The Christian missionaries played a great role in the improvement of the master-servant relations in South Africa. They preached, campaigned and commissioned books and pamphlets to be written on the maltreatment of servants by their white masters. In November 1809, it was proclaimed that masters should provide board and lodging for their servants and their families. They were also required to release their servants as soon as they had stopped working for them. Provision was made for appeal to local government councils by a servant if his master withheld his wages. He was also empowered to complain against serious ill-treatment. The master himself could accuse his servant of unsatisfactory conduct. This reform gave the coloured people much greater protection than they had before. In 1828, employment contracts which exceeded one year were prohibited. The law, called Ordinance also prohibited the apprenticeship of children without their parents' consent. It abolished the obligation of coloured people to carry passes whenever they were in white settlements.

It should however, be pointed out that the reform on master-servant relations concerned more specifically the Khoikhoi and free coloured people (i.e Mulatos) who were resident in the Cape Colony. It did not largely include the Xhosa who had to carry passes if they ventured into white settlements. No doubt, however, the freeing of the coloured people and the slaves was a major revolution in the legal system of the Cape Colony. The Boers, at least, regarded it to be so as we shall examine in the next chapter.

British rule and the question of the frontier

Another British reform was on the question of the frontier. The government tried to impose a frontier settlement by force. In 1812 for example, Xhosa chief, Ndlambe and his 20,000 subjects were driven away from their homes on the Suuveld. White people were given the area and Fish River became the new frontier. They also copied the Dutch company's tactics of supporting some Xhosa chiefs against others. But as we have already noted, the Xhosa never gave up their efforts to repossess their ancestral lands. In 1819, as we have already noted, Makanda led 10,000 Xhosa warriors to attack Graham town. The 1820 settlement, which we have already examined, failed to settle the border conflict.

Between 1829 and 1834, tension grew on the frontier. In December 1834, the Xhosa invaders attacked the eastern Cape destroying homesteads and seizing cattle. It was only in May 1835 that the Xhosa warriors were driven out. Governor D'urban of South Africa then annexed the whole area between the Keiskamma and the Kei. It was named Queen Adelaide Province. All the defeated Xhosa chiefs were ordered to move their followers beyond the Kei which was the new imposed frontier. Later on, it was agreed that Africans whose chiefs were considered loyal to the Europeans be allowed to settle in Queen Adelaide Province. They were, however, not allowed to settle among the Europeans. They were placed in reserved locations under white resident agents. The colonial office in London rejected the annexation of Queen Adelaide Province.

The above were some of the British colonial policies in South Africa during the three decades after their second coming. Those policies neither pleased the Africans nor the Boers. The British officials in the Cape Colony failed to control the frontier wars. It is true that the slave emancipation and regulations of master-servant relationships was some improvement on what obtained before. However, these legislations did not bring equality between the races in South Africa. The Boers were the group which more than any other, felt the impact of the British reforms. They left the Cape province in a historic movement that has since been termed the Great Trek. This shall be examined in the next chapter.

Questions

1. The first Europeans to come to South Africa were
 - A. the Dutch who later became what we now know as the

- Boers or Afrikaners
- B. the British
- C. the Spaniards
- D. the Portuguese
- E. the Germans

2. Which of these is correct?
- A. In 1488, Van Riebeck accompanied by 90 Dutchmen and 40 women arrived at Table Bay
 - B. In 1657, Jan Van Riebeck accompanied by nine employees of the Dutch East Africa Company arrived at Table Bay
 - C. In 1488, Batholomew Diaz accompanied by 90 Dutchmen and 40 women arrived at Table Bay
 - D. In 1652, Van Riebeck accompanied by 90 Dutchmen and 40 women arrived at Table Bay
 - E. In 1688, Batholomew Diaz accompanied by 40 Dutchmen and 90 women arrived at Table Bay
3. The Government of the Dutch East Africa Company sought to limit the contacts between the Xhosa and the trekboers because
- A. it was opposed to the conflicts between the Xhosa and the Boers since this was harming its economy
 - B. it did not want the Boers to adopt the cultures of the Xhosa since this would make them less European
 - C. it was afraid that the Xhosa may come to know more about the Boers and so attack and annihilate them
 - D. it was afraid that the Boers may catch incurable African diseases from the Xhosa
 - E. it wanted to protect the Xhosa from being exploited by the Boers
4. Which of these is wrong?
- A. In 1795, Britain occupied the Cape
 - B. Both the Company government and the Boers were opposed to the British occupation of the cape and they put up stiff resistance
 - C. The San and the Xhosa were indifferent to the British occupation of the Cape
 - D. In 1803, Britain withdrew from the Cape
 - E. In 1806, they re-occupied it again
5. In 1818, the British government offered to give free transport, 100 acres of farm land and some monetary help to

any British national who wanted to settle in South Africa.

The response was

- A. very poor; still not many British men wanted to settle in South Africa
 - B. very good; about 5000 British people arrived at the Cape in 1820
 - C. very good; about 5000 British people arrived at the Cape in 1818
 - D. not so good, 1000 British people settled at the Cape by 1820
 - E. fair; about 3000 British nationals and some few other Europeans settled in the Cape region by 1818
6. Discuss the factors that led to the earliest European settlement in South Africa.
 7. What were the problems that the earliest European settlers in South Africa faced? How far were they successful in solving them?
 8. Outline the factors responsible for the frontier wars
 9. What measures did the Company government adopt in controlling the frontier wars and how far were these successful?
 10. Discuss the British reforms between 1806 and 1835.

Further reading

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Chapter Twelve

The Great Trek and its consequences

Introduction

In this chapter, we shall examine the meaning of the Great Trek and the factors which caused it. We shall also discuss the course of the Great Trek and outline its consequences.

The meaning of the Great Trek

The Great Trek was an organised migration of thousands of Boers out of the Cape Colony. They crossed the frontier into the interior where they settled permanently. At the time when the movement began, those Boers who left referred to themselves as emigrants. Since the late nineteenth century, they have been known as *Voortrekkers* and their migration as the Great Trek. It was not the first time when people trekked in South Africa. In fact we have already noted that the trekboers had the habit of crossing the frontier in search of grazing land and game. The difference, however, is that the trekboers returned to the Colony or at least considered themselves citizens of the Colony. The Voortrekkers left the Cape Colony with no intention of returning.

The causes of the Great Trek

The Boers were unhappy with most of the British reforms which we outlined in the previous chapter. They were against the attempts to promote the English language, the English legal system and English customs over those of the Boers. They were also opposed to the abolishing of slavery and the attempt to interfere in the way they dealt with their servants and the latter's children. In addition the Boers were not happy with how the Cape government was handling the question of the frontier wars. The Boers had developed their own social, economic and cultural life in South Africa before the coming

of the British. The British reforms were aimed at destroying the Boer way of life in South Africa. At least that was how the Boers saw it. The best option, they decided, was to emigrate from areas of British control. They were determined to become free and independent people in an independent Boer state. In short, the Great Trek was a rebellion against the British government.

There were other additional factors which contributed to the Great Trek. The British immigrants who came after the inception of the British rule soon started to take over the commercial business from the Boers both in the Colony and in the interior. This did not please the Boers.

The coming of the British immigrants in 1820 led to the overcrowding of people in the Cape Colony. The majority of the white settlers were farmers, each of whom wanted thousands of acres of land to himself and his family. Such un-occupied good land was already becoming scarce by the time the Great Trek started.

The *Mfecane* also contributed to the Great Trek. The killing of people and destruction of property as well as the mass movement of people from their homes left many large un-occupied land. The Voortrekkers were aware of the existence of these un-occupied or empty lands before they left the colony. That helped to encourage them to emigrate. The fact that large areas were devoid of people also meant that it was easier to occupy, or so they thought.

In 1832, Dr. Andrew Smith was sent to the Zulu kingdom by the Governor of the Cape. He was ordered to find out the real military strength of Dingane, (Shaka's successor), king of the Zulu kingdom. Smith reported that in the vicinity of Port Natal, there was a depopulated country extending about 320 kilometres along the coast to the west and inland about 160 kilometres. In the same year, i.e. 1832, a party of about 30 Boers led by Piet Uys visited Natal to find out whether it was suitable for a farming settlement. Other parties explored other areas like Soutpansberg and Southwest Africa.

Thus when the Voortrekkers emigrated, it was not an aimless journey. They had prior information of possible areas where they hoped to settle. In fact by that time, there were several white men settled at Port Natal.

The course of the Great Trek

There were two areas which the scouting parties of the Boers said were fertile and uninhabited. These were the areas of Natal south of River Thukela and the central veld on either side of River Vaal. These

two areas were the 'Promised Land' towards which the Boers migrated. However, the Boers did not understand the true situation of these areas before they left the Cape Colony.

After careful planning which took about two years, there was a large-scale emigration of the Boers from the Cape Colony. The Voortrekkers were not united when they left. In fact they left the colony in series of trek parties. The families who migrated sold all their immovable properties in the Cape before they left. These included houses, shops and farms. They then bought large supplies of gun powder, collected their animals and loaded their properties on their wagons. Then they trekked northwards towards the 'Promised Land'.

The first Voortrekkers left the Cape Colony sometime in 1835. Others followed at various periods during the next three years. By 1837, there were about 6000 Voortrekkers – men, women and children. Most of the Voortrekkers came from the eastern half of the Colony. This, we saw was the area in which there were several clashes with the Xhosa. It was also the area in which most of the British immigrants in 1820 settled. In fact one-fifth of the white people in the eastern half of the Colony left during the Great Trek. The Trekkers took with them as many servants as they could. Most of these were Khoikhoi descendants. They also took many of their ex-slaves who were re-named 'apprentices' after the 1834 reforms.

The first Voortrekkers were two parties led by Louis Tregardt and Hans Van Rensburg. They totalled about 100 white men, women and children, as well as their servants. They left the colony in 1835 and joined forces near the Vaal River in April 1836. Their aim was the Central Veld, one of the 'Promised Lands'. They were, however, attacked by the tsetse fly and the mosquitoes which led to many of them becoming sick. In August 1836, Van Rensburg's party was killed by the Tsonga. This was at the northeastern corner of what is today Transvaal. In 1838, Tregardt's party reached Delagoa Bay where the leader and most of the other adults died of fever. The supervisors eventually went by sea to Port Natal where they joined the main body of the Voortrekkers.

From late 1835, other parties left the colony at different periods under their leaders. The prominent leaders were Adries Hendrick Potgieter, Gert Maritz, Piet Uys and Piet Retief. In 1836, most of the second batch of the Voortrekkers met at Thaba Nchu area.

Attempt by the Voortrekkers to unite

As we noted earlier, the Voortrekkers were not united when they left the Colony. However, when they arrived at Thaba Nchu, they

decided to organise themselves. In 1836, there was a general meeting of the Voortrekkers at Thaba Nchu area. They finally decided to create a Burgher Council of Seven members to run the affairs of all the Voortrekkers. Maritz was appointed President and Judge and Potgieter as Chief Commandant. However, in April 1837, another general meeting which was called, elected Retief as Governor and Chief Commandant. Maritz was confirmed in his offices as President and Judge. Potgieter was not given any office. This led to conflicts among the leadership of the Voortrekkers. They disagreed over religious leadership for the Voortrekkers and on the destination of the immigration into the interior. For example while Retief and Maritz preferred to go to Natal with their followers, Potgieter and Uys favoured the lands across the Vaal River.

The wars between the Voortrekkers and the African Kingdoms

We have already noted that it was a wrong assumption by the Voortrekkers that the areas where they aimed to move to were uninhabited. To start with, it was the Mfecane which forced the inhabitants of those areas to flee their homes. They had the intention of one day coming back to their ancestral lands. So the two areas were never truly uninhabited. Secondly, the two areas were under the domination of Mzilikazi, Chief of the Ndebele and Dingane, Chief of the Zulu, both of whom regarded any intrusion from the South with suspicion.

Potgieter and his followers arrived on the high veld early in 1836. In October 1836, their camp was attacked by the Ndebele forces. They captured all the sheep and cattle of the Voortrekkers. The Voortrekkers were forced to withdraw and sought asylum with Rolong, one of the African chiefs at Thaba Nchu. Later on, more Voortrekkers came from the colony. Maritz also led his followers there. In January, 1837, the Voortrekkers felt strong enough and attacked the Ndebele. They sacked the Ndebele settlement at Mosega, killing about 400 people and confiscated about 7000 cattle. In November 1837, Potgieter and Uys led another attack against the Ndebele. Mzilikazi was forced to flee northwards across the Limpopo with his followers. With these victories the Voortrekkers considered the central high veld to be theirs by right of conquest. However, soon, groups of the Sotho started to come back to their homes.

In October 1837, Retief led a small party of Voortrekkers to Natal. They were well received by Dingane, King of the Zulu. He even

promised to make land available to them at Natal. However, as we already noted, the Zulu were suspicious of the white men. In February 1838, Retief and some of his men who accompanied him to Mgungundlove – the Zulu headquarters – were ordered to be killed by Dingane. Ten days later, Zulu warriors attacked Natal where they killed a number of Boers and their servants. They captured about 35,000 cattle and sheep.

In the following months, there followed several clashes between the Zulu and the Voortrekkers. In March 1838, the Commandos of the Voortrekkers from Port Natal attacked and destroyed several Zulu villages and seized some cattle. However, in the following month when they again attacked Zululand, they were heavily defeated. The Zulu regiments then went to Port Natal and destroyed it. Those whites who survived took refuge on board the ship *comet* which happened to be in the harbour.

In the same April of 1838, an expedition of the Voortrekkers was ambushed by the Zulu. Piet Uys and his young son, Dirk, were among those who died. Portgieter led his followers back to the high veld. Those who remained at Natal were continually harassed by the Zulu warriors. They were short of food and many of them took ill. To make matters worse, Maritz, one of the prominent leaders of the Voortrekkers died in September 1838.

One month after the death of Maritz, Andries Pretorius arrived in Natal. He was invited by the Voortrekkers to come and lead them. He arrived with sixty mounted men and a cannon. He was appointed Commandant-General. He soon led a commando of 500 men against the Zulu. On the 16 December the two armies clashed. The 10,000 strong Zulu army armed mostly with stabbing spears, were eventually defeated. They were no match for a well-drilled army armed with firearms and mounted on horses. About 3,000 Zulu warriors were said to have died on the battlefield. The battlefield came to be known as Blood River and the battle has gone down in history as Blood-River-War.

Thus to build their new state in the 'Promised Land', the Voortrekkers fought and defeated the African peoples who owned the land. They were responsible for the defeat of the Ndebele and the Zulu, two of the most prominent African kingdoms which emerged with the Mfecane.

The emergence of the Boer Republics

One of the most important consequences of the Great Trek was the

establishment of the Boer Republics in the interior of South Africa. Let us outline the emergence and early development of these Republics.

The Republic of Natalia

After the Blood River War, most of the Voortrekkers settled in Natal. It was here that the Voortrekkers established the first Boer state. Their capital was called Pietermaritzburg. This name was in honour of Piet and Gerrit Maritz, two of their leaders who died during wars with the Zulu.

In March 1839, a constitution was made for the Republic of Natalia. It had a council of 24 Boers. These were elected every year by white male adults in open ballot. Andries Pretorius was appointed Commandant-General. However, his powers were limited. According to the constitution a citizen Voortrekker must be Dutch-speaking. He had to be not only a European but he also had to have been born and bred in the Cape Colony. Finally the citizen Voortrekker must be one of those Boers who emigrated from the Cape Colony during the Great Trek. All other Europeans who were not Boers had to prove their loyalty to the community of the Boers. It was only then that they could be absorbed. All people of non-European descent were seen as different human beings.

In July 1842, however, the young Boer Republic was attacked and defeated by British forces from the Cape Colony. In the following year, Natal came under the control of the British Cape Colony.

Trans-Vaal Republic

The Boers who were settled on the high veld rejected Natal's submission to the British. They thus broke away. In April 1844, they established the Trans-Vaal Republic with Potgieter as the leader. The capital was Potchefstroom. Most of the Voortrekkers gradually left Natal for the high veld. In 1845, Potgieter decided to move the capital from Potchefstroom to eastern Trans-Vaal. This was in order to be independent from both the British and the Portuguese colonial claims. The Portuguese who were already at Delagoa Bay were claiming the territory in the hinterland i.e. modern Mozambique.

Potgieter established a new capital at Ohrigstad which he helped to found. He persuaded the Boers to migrate there. However, the place was unhealthy. In addition, both the Portuguese and the Africans were opposed to the settlement of the Voortrekkers in the

area. More serious, however, was the conflict over the type of leadership to be adopted in the Republic. Potgieter preferred a powerful military government. He persuaded his followers to name him Hoofdkommand (Chief Commander). This style of government was, however, opposed by those Voortrekkers who moved from Natal when it was colonised by the British. They preferred the system of government which existed at the Republic of Natalia. Potgieter, when he found that he could not get what he wanted, led his followers out of the Trans-Vaal Republic.

The leadership of the young Boer Republic was taken over by Andries Pretorius who returned from Natal. However, up to 1858, Pretorius remained only one of the three leaders in the Trans-Vaal Republic. The three leaders were Pretorius himself who lived in Pottscheftroom. They called their area the South African Republic. The second leader was Stephanus Schoeman, who took over when Potgieter left. He was a leader of a sub-state which was to the north of South African Republic. The third leader was Lydenburg who with his followers lived in the east. In 1855, the site of modern Pretoria was chosen as the future capital of the Trans-Vaal Republic.

After several attempts, the various regions were united in 1858. Pretorius became the President and Schoeman became the Commandant-General.

The Orange Free State

The Voortrekkers established the Orange Free State in 1854. It had Trans-Vaal in the north, Natal in the east and the British Cape Colony in the South. Thus, geographically, the Orange Free State was in the middle of the white states in South Africa. In fact, the ideology of the Republic was also in the middle. The Afrikaners (Boers) here were moderate anti-imperialists. English speakers were welcomed and they could even expect to reach top positions in public life. English was commonly spoken in town and in business life. Dutch (the language of the Boers) was, however, the lingua franca. This liberalism, however, was extended only to white people.

The state had a council which was voted in by white male citizens who were eighteen years old and above. There was an Executive President who ruled for five years. He was elected by open ballot. He can be re-elected for another term. Josias Hoffman was elected the first President in 1854. One year later, he was forced to resign at gunpoint. His followers accused him of being friendly with King Moshoeshoe of the Sotho kingdom. He was succeeded by Jacobus Boshof.

In 1858, there followed a war between the Orange Free State and the Sotho kingdom. The Africans were victorious. This forced Boshof to seek help from the Cape Colony, The British authorities, however, refused to help. Boshof then turned to Pretorius, the President of Trans-Vaal Republic. The latter agreed to help but on condition that the Orange Free State became part of the Trans-Vaal Republic. This would have happened but for the opposition of British authorities at the Cape.

Relations between the Boer Republics and the Africans

The second consequence of the Great Trek was the spreading of the domination of the Africans by the white people in South Africa. Before the Great Trek, the domination was only limited to the Cape Colony. Many Africans who were defeated by the Boers or who did not belong to strong kingdoms like the Lesotho of Mzilikazi, were incorporated into the Boer Republics. They suffered direct economic exploitation and cultural domination by the Boers. The Boers rejected any view that said there was equality between whitemen and Africans. The latter were seen as sub-human beings. They were even referred to as *Skepsels* (creatures) rather than *Mense* (people). In fact this was their own Christian interpretation of life.

At first, there were few Africans where the Boers settled. To have enough servants, the Boers raided African settlements. Children were captured during these raids. They were then distributed to white farmers for whom they worked for until they were 21, if girls, or 25 years old, if boys. They were called 'apprentices' but there was no difference between it and slavery. African parents were often forced to give up their children to become 'apprentists'.

From 1839, however, there was a continuous influx of Africans into Natal and Transvaal. These were people returning to their homes from which they were dislodged by the Mfecane. In 1838 when the Voortrekkers arrived in Natal, the African population was about 10,000. By 1843, their number had increased to about 50,000. The Boers were alarmed by the increasing population of Africans in their midst. They therefore, decided to divide the Africans so as to prevent them from revolting. In 1841, Natal government decided that the majority of Africans should be kept in special reserved areas. It also decided that not more than five African families were to be allowed to live in one white farm.

In Transvaal, the same practice was followed as in Natal. Here, the Africans who did not live on the white farms were put under chiefs. Each chief paid tax in cattle and labour. The chiefs were also expected to supply men to assist the Boers in times of war. Chiefs were thus turned from rulers of independent chiefdoms into collaborators of an alien regime. Those Africans who did not settle on white farms had to carry passes every time they went into farm settlements. Even in the Orange Free State, the Boer ideology of white supremacy prevailed. In 1855, Asians were restricted in trading activities within the state. Five years later, further settlement of Asians was abolished. It was impossible for a black man to own land. This was despite the fact that at any given moment, the black population was at least double the size of the white people.

The resistance of the Africans to White domination

The Boers claimed that the Transvaal and its people were theirs. This, they said, was because they conquered the area. They therefore, felt entitled to demand submission and services from all Africans to the South of the Limpopo. These demands were however firmly resisted by the Africans. These included the Tswana in the west, the Sotho and Venda in the north and the Pedi in the east. These bought guns from the missionaries and traders and fought the Boers. For example, in 1854, the Sotho killed twelve members of the Boer Military Commando. The latter were demanding oxen and sheep from the chief of the Sotho without payment. They also wanted to force the Sotho to give them several of their children to be made 'apprentices'. After this, there was a general attack on the whitemen in the area. The Boers mobilised a large fighting force and invaded the Sotho settlement. The latter retreated into a nearby cave. The Boers blocked the cave with wood and stones. They prevented anybody from escaping. This went on for twenty-five days. It was estimated that about 900 of the Sotho were killed while trying to escape. About 2000 were thought to have died in the cave due to hunger and thirst. Despite this harsh treatment, another section of the Sotho revolted in 1859. The Venda also revolted in 1867. So effective was the Venda revolt that the Boers who were settling in their district left the area.

The Boers of the Orange Free State clashed with the southern Sotho of Moeshoeshoe's Lesotho kingdom, the Rolong and western Griqua. It was, however, with Moeshoeshoe's Sotho that the Boers had a very long and continuous conflict. Moeshoeshoe was forced to sign several treaties in which he lost a great deal of fertile land to the Orange Free

State. Finally in order to save the remainder of his kingdom from the Boers, Moshoeshoe asked for British protection. His kingdom was annexed as a British colony on 12 March 1868.

The Boer Republics and the Indian community in South Africa

Another consequence of the Great Trek was the large settlement of Indian community in the interior of South Africa. The white farmers who wanted to establish cotton and sugar plantations faced a more acute shortage of labour than other white farmers. We had already noted that in the Bantu culture, most work on the farm was left to women. So it was with difficulty that the white farmers forced through slavery and 'apprenticeship' the Bantu population to work on their farms. However, they faced real difficulties in forcing the Bantu to farm cash crops.

To solve the labour shortage in sugar and cotton plantations, labourers were recruited from India. They were mainly low caste Hindus from Madras. More than one third of those who came were women. The Indian labourers were brought on a five year contract at agreed low minimum wages. At the end of the five years, the Indian labourers could, if they wished, renew the contract for another five years. On the other hand, they could obtain their freedom to live and work in South Africa or to return to India. Those who stayed for ten years were paid for their fares to India by their employers.

In 1860, the first shipload of Indians arrived in Natal. From then on, many more arrived. By 1866, there were 6000 indentured Indians in Natal; in 1875, that figure rose to 10,000 and by the end of the nineteenth century, the Indians who were about 100,000 had outnumbered the whites in Natal. The Indians were the key factor in the development of Natal sugar industry.

At the end of their 10 year contract in 1870, most Indians decided to stay rather than go back to India. Many of them still remained as farmers on the plantations. There were others, of course, who moved to other occupations. They worked as artisans, cooks, house-servants, tailors, washermen, farmers and sellers of vegetables and fruits as well as shopkeepers. A few of them moved to other parts of South Africa.

Those who went back to India in 1870 complained bitterly of discrimination. We have already noted that as far as the Boers were concerned, all non-Europeans were second-class citizens. This meant

that the same treatment that was meted to the Africans were extended to the Asians. In addition, many complained of excessive brutalities like flogging from their employers. Others complained that their employers withheld large parts of their wages. These complaints were investigated and found to be true. In 1871, the Indian government forbade further recruitment of labourers to South Africa. It was only in 1874, after some reform was made, that the recruitment resumed.

From the late 1870s, Gujrati traders from India, most of whom were Muslims, started to arrive in South Africa. They came on their own initiative. They opened shops in towns of Natal, The Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The white shopkeepers in the Boer Republics felt threatened by the arrival of the Indians. An attempt was made to force them to go back to India. When that did not work they were discriminated against. In 1893, Mahatma Ghandi arrived in Natal on a legal assignment. When he found the discrimination meted against the Indians, he decided to stay and help them. In fact it was in South Africa that Mahatma Ghandi developed his famous theory of non-violent-protest against colonial rule which he later used in his native India.

The discovery of minerals in South Africa

Another consequence of the Great Trek was the discovery of precious minerals in the interior of South Africa. Certainly, minerals had been exploited for centuries by the indigenous African peoples of South Africa. These were, however, on a small-scale. The Great Trek encouraged large-scale movements of Europeans into the interior. Once there, they intensified the search for mineral deposits. When these were discovered, they used their advanced technologies in working the mines on a large-scale.

Coal was found in Natal and the north-eastern Cape in the 1840s and 1850s respectively. Copper was being mined in the north-western Cape since 1852. However, the greatest mineral discoveries took place some three decades after the Great Trek had started. In 1867, extensive gold deposits were discovered on the Tati River in Ngwato Country. In the same year, diamond deposits were found near the Confluence of the Orange and Vaal Rivers. Three years later, rich diamond fields were discovered where the town of Kimberly now stands. In 1886, gold was discovered at Witwatersrand which lay deep in the Transvaal State.

The discovery of these minerals changed the history of South

Africa. It became a place where riches could be made. Thousands of people poured into the interior of South Africa especially the Transvaal State. Within a few years, some 45,000 people, 15000 of them Europeans, were concentrated around the diamond mines. Some came with capital to invest while many came to work there.

The gold and diamond mines were situated in the interior. It therefore became necessary to build railway lines which connected the mines to the ports. This was to make easy the evacuation of the minerals to the ports for shipment to Europe. The building of the railways naturally opened the interior of South Africa. It further opened South Africa to foreigners and foreign influence. It also intensified the struggle for the ownership of land and of political power. This was especially between the white minority elements of the population. In addition, the discovery of diamonds and gold hastened the growth of industries in South Africa. It also led to the emergence of urban centres. Finally, the discovery of the minerals hastened the colonisation of South Africa.

The emergence of South Africa as one political entity and its domination by Britain

Up to 1870, South Africa was simply a geographical expression. It was not politically united under one government. The region was divided into British colonies and protectorates; Boer Republics and independent African chiefdoms. By 1902, however, South Africa was one political entity. It was also brought under the domination of Britain. Let us give an outline of how that came about.

Britain had been the most influential power in South Africa. Her Navy controlled the seas of South Africa. Most of the goods imported into or exported out of South Africa were carried in British ships. Most of the missionaries and the leading businessmen were British. The Cape Colony and Natal were already British colonies; and these were the most significant states in South Africa during the nineteenth century. In addition, several African chiefdoms were in varying degrees of subjection to Britain. From the above it could not have come as a surprise when Britain finally united and colonised the region.

In actual fact, British traders, missionaries and political agents had for long wanted Britain to colonise South Africa. Britain had resisted this request because she was reluctant to use British tax payers' monies in administering colonies. However, the discovery of diamonds and gold from 1867 onwards meant that South Africa was now rich enough to look after itself. In addition, there were now

several British businessmen who had invested their wealth which Britain was obliged to protect. Thus the discovery of the minerals contributed to Britain's determination to control the affairs of South Africa.

The scramble also contributed to Britain's determination to colonise South Africa. In the 1880s, Germany proclaimed a protectorate over South West Africa (today's Namibia). German political agents then began to negotiate with independent African chiefs and the Boer Republic of Transvaal. As it happened elsewhere, the challenge of another European power urged Britain to bring most of South Africa under her domination.

By the 1870s, most of the indigenous African populations were in one way or another under the influence of the Europeans. In addition, the Africans were weak and divided. Each chiefdom or community fought with one another. They were thus, unable to unite against the European intruders.

On the other hand, the Europeans had a common agreement against the Africans. For example since 1852, the British authorities in South Africa came to an agreement with the Boers that arms were not to be sold to the Africans. The Boers, however, were guaranteed free access to British arms markets. The Africans, as we have noted, were able to obtain arms 'illegally' from missionaries and smugglers. But the fact that they were prevented from the main arms markets meant that they were in a weak position despite their numerical superiority. The lack of unity among the Africans and their lack of sufficient firearms despite their numerical superiority was another reason which encouraged Britain to conquer or coerce them to subjection.

It should also be pointed out that although the Boers and the British were united against the Africans, the relationship between them was not cordial. We have already examined why that was so. There were major differences between the Boers and the British. The Boers were also weak numerically and economically. Britain was urged to bring them to subjection as quickly as possible before they were able to unite or become strong economically.

After the discovery of the minerals, there was an increase in the attempt to subject the African chiefdoms to the British rule. For example after 1867, Griqualand, where diamonds were discovered, became an area of dispute between Britain and the Boer Republic. In 1871 Griqualand became a British crown colony and in 1880, it was incorporated into the Cape Colony. The Africans who showed their opposition were brutally suppressed. We have already noted that Basutoland was annexed by Britain in 1869 and incorporated into the

Cape Colony in 1871. We also noted that other African chiefdoms were conquered and incorporated into the British colony. These included the Zulu and the Xhosa.

After encircling the Boer Republics, Britain decided to finally incorporate them into her colonial empire. In 1877, Britain annexed the Boer Republic of Transvaal. This did not go well with the Boers. Between 1899 and 1902, there was a bitter war between Britain and the two Boer Republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State. Britain defeated the Boer Republics.

The war between the Boers and the British was not like other wars between the European imperialists and the Africans which we have examined. The war was fought to determine which white minority held real power in South Africa. There were brutalities on both sides. People were killed and properties destroyed. But, nonetheless, it was a 'gentlemen's war'. The Africans were not involved except as carriers and menial workers. Of course all blacks found on Boer farms were taken to concentration camps where they were put under military control. Thousands of them died. In 1902, the Boers agreed to surrender their independence to Britain. The union of South Africa under British rule was established.

Questions

1. The Great Trek means
 - A. the wars between the Boers and the Africans
 - B. Afrikaners who went into the interior of South Africa to settle
 - C. an organised migration of thousands of Boers out of the Cape Colony
 - D. to put one's belongings into a wagon drawn by horses and trek
 - E. the rush of Europeans into the interior of South Africa where gold and diamond was discovered in the 1860s
2. Which of these is wrong?
 - A. The Voortrekkers were not united when they emigrated from the Cape Colony
 - B. The Voortrekkers left in small parties each under its own leader
 - C. The Voortrekkers abandoned their houses and farms,

- loaded their belongings on their wagons and trekked away
- D. Two-thirds of the white people in the eastern half of the colony emigrated during the Great Trek
 - E. The first Voortrekkers who left sometimes in 1835 moved northwards without definite destination
3. According to the Boers' interpretation of life
 - A. all human beings were equal
 - B. only African Christians were considered equal to average Europeans
 - C. all other races were inferior to Europeans
 - D. only African slaves were inferior to Europeans
 - E. Europeans and Asians were equal
 4. On a map of South Africa, indicate the directions of the Great Trek.
 5. Outline the causes of the Great Trek
 6. Discuss the wars between the *Voortrekkers* and the Zulu and the Ndebele between 1836 and 1839.
 7. Outline the establishment and developments of the Boer Republics between 1839 and 1858.
 8. What were the consequences of the Great Trek
 9. What was the impact of the discovery of gold and diamond in the history of South Africa?
 10. Compare and contrast the British conquest and colonisation of South Africa with that of any other African kingdom of your choice.

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