

BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN AFRICA

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1. AFRICA AS A WHOLE

The African continent has now become a decisive sector for the imperialists - and for the united fight of the British people with the colonial peoples. For the imperialists it is a vast reservoir of raw materials, mineral wealth, strategic war material, cheap labour, and for the extraction of maximum profits. It occupies one-fifth of the earth's surface, has huge reserves of iron ore and its potential water-power is three times as great as the whole of Europe - only 2% of which is being utilised. Together with a considerable production of cotton, wool, columbite, and many other products, in terms of the percentage of capitalist world production it accounts for the following:

Diamonds (industrial)	80%	Phosphates	35.5%
Gold	57.7%	Copper	18%
Chrome or/and Manganese	30%	Hard Fibres	40.4%
Cocoa	68.3%	Palm Oil	69.5%
Sisal	75%	Coffee	15.35%
Cobalt	80%		

At the same time, African economy is based mainly on agriculture, upon which three-quarters of the peoples depend, and most territories are limited to one or two main crops. The number of wage-earners in industry is 4% of the total population of 202 million, and the most industrialised territories are the Union of South Africa, and Southern Rhodesia. African wage levels range between 10/- and 30/- a week and is generally one twentieth the rate for white workers.

Africa has been divided and re-divided among the imperialist powers since 1876, when 10% of the continent had been partitioned, rising to 90% in 1900. After its complete division in 1914 it was redivided after the first world war, and again after the second world war. It is now divided among six colonial powers - Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, with the U.S.A. virtually in control of Liberia and increasing its financial penetration throughout Africa.

Total foreign investments in Africa in 1949 was £1,222 million of which the bulk is British investments. U.S. capital is mainly concentrated in South Africa and the two Rhodesias. Apart from this, there are large Government investments through the medium of the Marshall Plan, Point Four, O.E.E.C. etc. All of these however are devoted to long-term projects of providing public services (power schemes, water supplies, railways, roads, bridges, etc.) which pave the way for private foreign investments to get the benefits of more immediate and bigger profits.

Africa looms large in the imperialist war plans. The R.A.F. has flown 10 million miles in the past six years, making a photographic