

## **Did the colonial powers succeed in transforming their African possessions into Greater Britain and *la France d'outre-mer*?**

Ever since their first arrival on the coasts of Africa, French and British traders and later settlers consistently wished to see transformations in the lifestyles of the African peoples under their dominion, even when the size of that dominion was remarkably small, as in the coastal holdings in West Africa mid-way through the nineteenth century. Yet what was most noticeable about the way French and British governments handled their holdings on the African coast was the way in which they consistently sought to reduce their strategic importance, and to ensure that there was never grounds for turning them into an international incident. French and British interests in Africa were effectively separated in Africa by means of an understanding in the relative Foreign ministries, which was shared much less by the people on the ground, where cultural and personal posturing could easily have shattered the peaceful exploitation of a large continent. Indeed, such was the evidence of Franco-British goodwill in the colonial sphere that Britain supported the restitution of French colonies in the post-Vienna settlement. Madagascar for instance was handed back to French rule, as was the island of Réunion in the Indian Ocean. Another factor aiding the peaceful coexistence of French and British interests in Africa was the very limited roles which both countries sought in Africa, especially that of France. Even by the third quarter of the nineteenth century, there was comparatively little French trade in Africa (including Algeria), since the French economy had grown to cope without a significant export trade, and since French consumption did not easily favour the main exports of her African territories, such as palm oil, little impetus for expansion. Likewise British expansion saw little benefit in genuinely engaging with the African lands with whom they engaged in highly profitable trade in manufactures, even after the formal abolition of the slave-trade. Trade treaties between Britain and African chiefs in the early to mid nineteenth century invariably concentrate on four points - abolition of the slave trade; free trade for white men; help for ships in distress; protection of missionaries.

None of these required any significant effort to convert African traditional life, except possibly the need for vigilance to stamp out the slave-trade which had served both African coastal chiefs and European merchants so handsomely in the previous century. In fact, French public opinion in contrast to Britain was never significantly concerned with the slave trade in Africa, except for small intellectual minorities. Much to the annoyance of Britain, only token efforts were taken by the French to use naval power to combat the slave trade, where Britain valiantly attempted to stamp out the very large-scale trade off the coast of East Africa. Zanzibar for instance still exported 50-70,000 slaves per year as late as 1865, mostly bound for the Middle East and India. Subsequent French expansion in Africa was to some extent directed at areas where the slave-trade remained strong - and even remains to this day: Gabon, Senegal, Madagascar and most of all Ouidah. The French government did make a proclamation in Gabon in 1846 that 'the slave trade for export must cease completely in the said river, as in all lands, islands, peninsulas or capes which this river touches, full and complete sovereignty of these parts being conceded to His Majesty, the King of the French.'<sup>1</sup> However, this treaty is notable not for its lip-service against the slave trade, but for the explicit way in which it announces the acquisition of French sovereignty over that part of the coast. French treaties with local leaders in these areas, often begin with a cession of political sovereignty to France, and generally attempt to gain a trade monopoly.<sup>2</sup> Yet even with this quite categorical aim, even the vigilance of the British administration was often caught against the impossibility of abolishing slavery in practice in the

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Brunschwig *Anglophobia and French African Policy* in Gifford and Louis *France and Britain in Africa* (New Haven, 1971) p.6

<sup>2</sup> cited in Henri Brunschwig *Anglophobia and French African Policy* p.13

parts of Africa which they came later to control directly. The practice had been so long-lasting that it was genuinely ingrained in the African societies of the interior. The British Resident in Bida in the north of Nigeria commented in 1900 that 'If slavery - the national labour system - be abolished, with what are we to replace it? It will take years - generations - to teach the pagans who form the slave population the meaning of hired labour, and if the existing labour system is broken down *before* there is a new one to replace it nothing but ruin and famine can result.'<sup>3</sup> Despite good intentions and the ferocious lobbying of the anti-slavery societies in London, it simply proved impossible to implement European-style labour policies on parts of the world where there was no history of them. Even in Sierra Leone - the colony created for freed slaves - the slave economy was so strong that by 1925 a seventh of the population was still slaves.<sup>4</sup> The desire to introduce this European moral value into Africa also clashed with the need to maintain good relations with the traditional hierarchies of African society, such that they would continue to act for the British as guarantees of security. Such a situation might arrive when a collaborative chief asked for help in recapturing runaway slaves, a situation so delicate that the Colonial Office ducked the issue in 1897. 'Whether the policy be right or wrong,' they said in response to a question from northern Nigeria, 'such a letter would be most injudicious. Copies of it would certainly reach this country, and it would be difficult to defend the Governor's conduct. Colonel McCallum should be instructed on no account to write any such letter and as far as possible to avoid committing himself in writing to any general statement of policy on slavery.'<sup>5</sup> In general, then, European attempts to stamp out the slave trade were genuine insofar as politicians consistently felt the domestic pressure to continue efforts for its eradication. Unfortunately, events often got in the way, and compromises were often made to continue the social stability of colonial rule.

The emphasis on trade as the *raison d'être* for colonial enterprises in Africa therefore meant a genuine attempt to integrate Africa into the developing world economy, and to produce products which were required elsewhere in the world. Certainly in North Africa, the colonial powers made serious efforts to facilitate this. In Senegal, groundnuts which had formed 31% of exports in 1860, were so valuable that by 1900 they made up 71%. Algerian vineyards increased tenfold from the 15,000ha of 1878 to the 167,000ha of 1903 - and wine products made up 50% of Algeria's exports by 1936. In Egypt, cotton's share of exports had reached 78% by 1900. However, even if a niche had been identified, attempts to create a European-style labour force to produce these agricultural products was almost invariably doomed to failure. In British Africa, there had in 1895 been attempts to impose private property on the Gambia, yet the Governor could say in 1912 that 'there is no doubt in my mind that the tribal system of communal tenure of land is the most suitable for West Africa. The marked development of the cocoa industry in the Gold Coast during the last decade is a striking proof of what can be done by the West African under that excellent system.'<sup>6</sup> Paper after paper proved the failure of attempts to graft on European labour practices onto regions which did not share the same ethic. Birtwhistle informed the Royal Colonial Institute in 1907 that 'There are hundreds of thousands of the best type of native who would not go out and serve under a white overseer for a daily wage, but who, working in their own way, and in their own time, would accomplish far more than the average paid labourer.'<sup>7</sup> Belfield reported in 1912 that 'the permanent cultivation of land on scientific lines and under European supervision seems to have made little or no headway in the Colony [Gold Coast].'<sup>8</sup> However, even granted these examples, it still remains clear that there was a

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<sup>3</sup> cited in Phillips *The Enigma of Colonisation* (London, 1989) p.29

<sup>4</sup> Phillips *The Enigma of Colonisation* p.29

<sup>5</sup> cited in Phillips *The Enigma of Colonisation* p.31

<sup>6</sup> cited in Phillips *The Enigma of Colonisation* p.72

<sup>7</sup> cited in Phillips *The Enigma of Colonisation* p.71

<sup>8</sup> cited in Phillips *The Enigma of Colonisation* p.74

fundamental disagreement between British and French administrators as to how best to govern territories they had acquired. For Britain, the perceived need to implement a policy of best practice into the sphere of agriculture had clashed against the stronger prejudice in favour of governing by means of light association with local notables. Commercialisation of the land disturbed this balance, and had led the chiefs in the words of the West African Lands Committee (1916) 'to set aside "those rules and regulations of native tenure" which constitute the cement which holds native society together and to undermine the native system of government through the chiefs, which as we have seen, is the only way in which a country like the Gold Coast can be efficiently governed.'<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, French administrators positively welcomed this trend. Governor-Général Ponty of AOF said in 1914 'My long experience in West Africa among the black populations has permitted me to conclude in the clearest fashion... that the native intermediaries between the mass of the population and the administrators of the *cerdes* or their subordinates are mostly nothing but parasites living on the population and existing without profit to the treasury.'<sup>10</sup> There was some opposition to this sentiment among certain segments of French colonial thinking. Napoleon III indeed broke with the previous policy which 'sententiously advanced to assimilate the Arab population, but having no other result but its exploitation, and the sacrifice of its most cherished institutions to our interests.'<sup>11</sup> However, with the British regard for the maintenance of traditional hierarchies, assimilation of European ideas into Africa would be much harder, since opposition would still be in place. To some degree this attitude was fostered by the respective backgrounds of British and French administrators themselves. British administrators mostly came from the gentry class which maintained an aristocratic concern with excellence and incorruptibility, and looked with favour on the maintenance of chiefly power whereas French administrators were often from middle or lower-class backgrounds, and had a bourgeois disregard for feudalism. In this way, the destruction of local élites in itself can be seen as an attempt to assimilate local populations into the concepts of French political equality. However, the lack of democratic participation in French Africa to match this gave the lie to this idea - advisory councils were created in AOF in 1919-20, and AEF only in 1938 - and neither had any formal powers at all.<sup>12</sup>

The primary means of asserting foreign control over Africa also varied between the British and French examples. Lord Salisbury outlined on 30 March 1892 that 'The colonial policy of Great Britain and France in West Africa has been widely different. France... has pursued steadily the aim of establishing herself on the Upper Niger by a large and constant expenditure, and by a succession of military expeditions. Great Britain, on the other hand, has followed a policy of advance by commercial enterprise. She has not attempted to compete with the military operations of her neighbour.'<sup>13</sup> Certainly, there was a noticeable lack of French trading presence in the countries which were rapidly falling under their military domination. Charles Viard wrote home on 26 Mar 1886 by saying 'For forty days I have done nothing but pay visits, make representations and requests, and write letters to the French business world, which is undergoing such difficulties, and has such a need for new impetus. I tried to rouse it from its torpor and interest it in my journey and the advantages it would bring; I made requests to everybody, bit for merchandise but merely for collections of samples. I obtained no response, or those replies which I did receive drove me to despair.'<sup>14</sup> However, as he later said 'Although I have had no

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<sup>9</sup> cited in Phillips *The Enigma of Colonisation* p.76

<sup>10</sup> cited in Cohen *French Colonial Service in West Africa* in Gifford and Louis *France and Britain in Africa* (New Haven, 1971) p.498

<sup>11</sup> Ageron *Modern Algeria* p.39

<sup>12</sup> Cohen *French Colonial Service in West Africa* p.508

<sup>13</sup> cited in Kanya-Forstner *Military Expansion in the Western Sudan 1885-1898* in Gifford and Louis *France and Britain in Africa* (New Haven, 1971) p.409

<sup>14</sup> cited in Hargreaves *British and French Imperialism in West Africa 1885-1898* p.268

success, I do not despair of my countrymen. They fall back too much upon the State because they are ignorant, because they are still too timid.<sup>15</sup> The French government did most certainly offer great deals of support for trade in the areas newly under its control - as long as the trade was with metropolitan France. The French metropolitan government guaranteed loans to the value of 613,000 francs to her North African territories before 1914. Joseph Chamberlain in Britain echoed such interventionist sentiments on 22 Aug 1895 when he said 'I regard many of our colonies as being in the condition of underdeveloped estates, and estates which can never be developed without Imperial assistance.'<sup>16</sup> However, most British aid to the development of colonies did not come from the government at all, but private investors who were prepared to pour vast sums of money into colonial projects. Where French Equatorial Africa counted three quarters of her total listed capital from public listed capital, the Gold Coast received only two fifths from public sources between 1870-1936.<sup>17</sup> Free Trade also initially made little difference to the relative importance of the mother country in terms of a territory's trade patterns. Guizot had mollified the British Ambassador regarding Assinie in 1843 by saying 'the King's Government, with regard to the new trading posts which it has just founded, has so little idea of being exclusive, that they are freely open to European trade.'<sup>18</sup> Yet in 1895, France accounted for 79.5% of Algeria's imports and exports to France made up 86.5% of the total. France in 1895 took 42.2% of Madagascar's exports and provided 66.4% of her imports. Britain provided 65.8% of the imports of all her African colonies, and took 65.9% of their exports.<sup>19</sup> However, Free Trade also shows the very real difference in attitudes between British and French traders into the 20th century. Where France maintained her stranglehold on the trade of her colonies - the share of French exports going to her African colonies increasing from 8.9% in 1900 to 28.2% in 1959 and the share of her imports increasing from 5% in 1900 to 20.3% in 1959 - Britain did not. Where Africa accounted for 5% of British exports in 1905 the figure for 1962 was 9.7%; where Africa provided 5.4% of British imports in 1905 the figure was 8.6% by 1962.<sup>20</sup> To reinforce this, where Britain had accounted for two thirds of the external trade of her African colonies at the turn of the nineteenth century, by 1962 this had slipped to under one third. British Africa was no longer dependent on the metropole for its economic survival. The use of free trade by the British therefore can be seen as a force which allowed their colonies not simply to accept British mercantile wisdom, but also to break free of the grip of the mother country herself.

Trading rights may have been important, but they were not the only motivation for Europeans to travel to Africa, and to attempt to change existing practices. The missionary urge to bring the Christian faith to the Dark Continent was a serious one throughout the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and one which necessarily had large effects on the attitude of the civil government. Britain alone sent approximately 10,000 missionaries overseas by 1900, and in 1908 she spent £2.4m on supporting the missionary activities, some 40% of the world total. In the past they had had some profound successes, such that Abbé Boilat - a Senegalese of Wolof origin reported in 1853 that 'Free or temporary unions, which under the name of 'marriage country-style', have now fallen into disgrace and dishonour, at least in Saint-Louis. They were no longer able to withstand the preaching of the Gospel.'<sup>21</sup> For some, they were the forefront of the effort to spread English culture to new people, but they also went hand in hand with the development of a European bureaucracy and control over the territories missionaries visited. Herman Merivale said in 1861 'the native races must in every instance either perish, or be

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<sup>15</sup> cited in Hargreaves *British and French Imperialism in West Africa 1885-1898* p.268

<sup>16</sup> cited in Kanya-Forstner *Military Expansion in the Western Sudan 1885-1898* p.414

<sup>17</sup> Fieldhouse *Economic exploitation of Africa* in Gifford and Louis *France and Britain in Africa* (New Haven, 1971) pp.642-662

<sup>18</sup> cited in Henri Brunschwig *Anglophobia and French African Policy* p.20

<sup>19</sup> Fieldhouse *Economic exploitation of Africa* pp.642-662

<sup>20</sup> Fieldhouse *Economic exploitation of Africa* pp.642-7

<sup>21</sup> cited in J.D. Hargreaves *France and West Africa* (London, 1969) p. 93

amalgamated with the general populations of the country,' for which missionaries aided by civil government was 'not merely useful but indispensable.'<sup>22</sup> Harry Johnston reported in 1888 that 'Missions strengthen our hold over the country, they spread the use of the English language, they induct the natives into the best kind of civilisation, and in fact each mission station is an essay in colonisation.'<sup>23</sup> However, for the Europeans, it also created many confusions regarding the status of missionaries in the context of European society which seldom understood the realities of colonial rule. Sir Alfred Lyall in 1899 found it inescapable for the Government of India to avoid having 'to submit its proceedings to tribunals of religious opinion in Europe as well as in Asia, and to take account of theological prejudice in two continents.'<sup>24</sup> Even for missionaries themselves, the tension between Europe and Africa was palpable, such that Bishop Tozer of the UMCA felt the need to stress that 'The Bishop... and not a Home Committee representing the subscriber, must be the centre of authority in all missionary work.'<sup>25</sup> Missionary demands could also impose large burdens on the civil government, such that a missionary in Nigeria meaningfully hinted in 1892 that 'War is often the means of opening a door for the gospel to enter a country. A sword of steel often goes before a sword of the spirit. The landing of troops here may be part of the divine plan for answering our prayers and opening Ijebu and other interior countries to the gospel.'<sup>26</sup>

Yet it was almost impossible for evangelism to lead to assimilation of Africans to European tastes, especially since evangelism itself was not to most European tastes. Gambetta may have said reassuringly to Lavignerie that 'L'antichérisme, Monseigneur, c'est pour la France, mais ce n'est pas article d'exportation,' but this did not mean that anticlericalism did not exist at all.<sup>27</sup> In fact, even had missionaries been able to export all the aspects of European civilisation and culture, there is little evidence that they would have assimilated African peoples any more successfully. As Bishop Steere pointed out, African converts in missions, 'since its residents had not ties with the outside world, they only produced a small impact on the religion of the surrounding area - especially since residents who lacked all the family and social ties were regarded by other Africans as more foreign than the Europeans.'<sup>28</sup> Instead, successful missionary activity as judged by the missionary societies lay precisely in not assimilating converts to English thinking and outlook. By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, LMS missionaries were being instructed 'Do not Anglicise your converts. Remember that the people are foreigners. Let them continue as such. Let their foreign individuality be maintained. Build upon it, so far as it is sound and good... Seek to develop an mould a pure, refined and Christian character, native to the soil.'<sup>29</sup> In fact, advice from the Rev Chauncey Maples in 1895 went so far as to say 'the European missionary must become an African to win Africans. He must, so far as is consistent with his Christian principles, assimilate himself to them.'<sup>30</sup> The assimilation of Africans to European values is clearly not the aim of later missionaries, and indeed quite the reverse in that missionaries are being asked to compromise their own viewpoint to fit in with their neighbours. Even the most ardent of supporters of the role of missionaries in civilising African peoples admits that in the words of Abbé Boilat 'I have not illustrated the costume or features of the coloured men called Senegalese *habitants*; they typically take after the Caucasian race, and their

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<sup>22</sup> cited in Porter *British Expansion in the long Nineteenth Century* (Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, Sep 1992) p.372

<sup>23</sup> cited in Porter 'Cultural Imperialism' and Protestant Missionaries (Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, Sep 1997) p.369

<sup>24</sup> cited in Porter *British Expansion in the long Nineteenth Century* p.373

<sup>25</sup> cited in Porter *British Expansion in the long Nineteenth Century* p.383

<sup>26</sup> cited in Porter *British Expansion in the long Nineteenth Century* p.382

<sup>27</sup> Oliver *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* p.46

<sup>28</sup> Oliver *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* p.64

<sup>29</sup> cited in Porter 'Cultural Imperialism' and Protestant Missionaries p.377

<sup>30</sup> cited in Porter *British Expansion in the long Nineteenth Century* p.383

costume us completely French. It is not so with the women called *signares*, who have still keep their distinctive costume.<sup>31</sup> In any case, there was often a confusion between the propagation of the gospel and the spreading of distinctively English or French cultural values - since did these cultural values lie in the sphere of religion at all? George Allan remarked observantly in 1900 that 'After all, the perfection of cricket is not the essence of Christianity.'<sup>32</sup> It was games like cricket and rugby, as well as other sports such as ice-hockey in other territories, which best portrayed the aristocratic values of British administrators - values available only to high-class dignitaries and their sons, and not to the majority of the population in either African or any other colonies.

Missionaries were in a better position to assimilate local populations into the culture which they brought with them if they were in charge of the educational system, as they had been in many parts of Africa in the middle of the nineteenth century. French education in the colonial period was often farmed out to the Alliance Française or Catholic missionary societies, until the Dreyfus Affair comprehensively destroyed this link. Yet attempts to inculcate French or English ideas into Africans were in fact mostly vague aspirations. Anne Raffanel (1856) 'That which matters above all else is to attack the antagonism which separates the two races... in a word to foster assimilation.'<sup>33</sup> Guy de Lusignan wrote in 1969 'The French naively convinced that their own system was perfect, dreamed of reshaping Africa on the model of France, and just as any little boy from Toulouse, Brittany or Flanders learned to say "our forefathers the Gauls..." so did the little African. The French educational system, free, secular and republican, was to create black Frenchmen.'<sup>34</sup> Yet these were simply not possible to achieve even had there been a genuine desire to create a viable Europeanised élite - since the vast majority of Africans did not go to school at all, and even the Europeans themselves had not had the benefit of their own school system. Except for graduates of the *École Coloniale*, most French administrators were poorly educated, and prior to 1900, not even a third had had a secondary education. Such was the poor quality of early French administrators in Africa that between 1888-99 only 47% of administrators were considered capable by their governors, the poor ones being shipped off to other colonies especially Congo. One administrator in Congo was certified by the colony's doctor since he was not 'in full possession of his mental faculties because of an overdose of certain drugs and alcohol', had burned down two villages and enjoyed shooting at people who walked past his house - yet was nevertheless retained in the local administration.<sup>35</sup> Attempts to use education for the purpose of assimilation also suffered from the growing scientific racism that was becoming more prominent in European scientific circles. As Dunn claimed 'the receding forehead and projecting jaws of the Negro speak a language which cannot be mistaken... for whenever and wherever ignorance and brutality, destitution and squalor have for a long time existed, this prognathous type invariably prevails. By contrast the Saxon broad forehead, upright jaws and symmetrical features clearly indicate the harmonious development of the whole brain, and a special fullness in the intellectual and moral regions.'<sup>36</sup> Gustave Le Bon claimed further in 1894 that 'One easily makes a school graduate or lawyer of a Negro or of a Japanese; but one only gives him a simple veneer, altogether superficial, without acting on his mental constitution... This Negro or Japanese will accumulate all the diplomas possible without ever arriving at the level of an ordinary European.'<sup>37</sup> In this context it is unsurprising that educationalists such as Mairot - Inspector-General of Senegal outlined in 1906 that 'we hope to inculcate in the black

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<sup>31</sup> cited in Hargreaves *France and West Africa* p.94

<sup>32</sup> cited in Porter *British Expansion in the long Nineteenth Century* p.373

<sup>33</sup> cited in Gifford & Weiskel *African Education in a Colonial Context* in Gifford and Louis *France and Britain in Africa* (New Haven, 1971) p.667

<sup>34</sup> cited in Gifford & Weiskel *African Education in a Colonial Context* p.671

<sup>35</sup> cited in Cohen *French Colonial Service in West Africa* p.496

<sup>36</sup> Bolt *Victorian Attitudes to Race* p.16

<sup>37</sup> cited in Gifford & Weiskel *African Education in a Colonial Context* in Gifford and Louis *France and Britain in Africa* (New Haven, 1971) p.678

Africans the ideas of justice and equality, to give them a practical French education, appropriate to their mentality.<sup>38</sup>

However, one of the main uses of education for the colonial rulers was to train a new set of local administrators and soldiers. French technical schools such as Ecole des Otages and the Ecole d'apprentissage de Kayes (1897) produced excellent interpreters, clerks and artisans. James Currie, the Director of Education in Sudan (1900) summarised the aims of educational policy as being 'the creation of a competent artisan class... the diffusion among the masses of the people of education sufficient to enable them to understand the merest elements of the machinery of government... and the creation of a small native administrative class.'<sup>39</sup> However, it can be seen from this that native education in colonies was only intended by the rulers to benefit a small élite of native dignitaries, and by no means to extend to the whole of the population. Article 12 of the 1903 education ordinance in Senegal specified that 'Schools opened or to be opened in all towns with a sufficient European or assimilated element to justify their establishment will receive the name of "urban schools."<sup>40</sup> From this it is clear that priority was to be given to Europeans and if rich natives also attended these schools, that was fine, though a quota remained in place. In 1890 only 10,000 Muslim children - a mere 1.9% of those of school age - attended public or private French schools in Algeria.<sup>41</sup> In British Africa, education also took a low profile in governmental priorities, such that even in 1922, education accounted for only 1% of Ugandan expenditure, and in Tanganyika only 0.5%. In Kenya, Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Tanganyika, there was still no secondary schooling for Africans funded by the government as late as 1938. Higher education as well was entirely for the benefit of the small élites, such as the French Ecole Coloniale, which was created in 1885 for the education of the children of colonial dignitaries, as well as future administrators. By 1914, the Faculty of University College of Algiers had awarded only 34 *baccalauréats* and 12 degrees to Muslims. Africans and other colonials travelling to England or France for higher education faced racist taunts from locals and discrimination. It is not surprising that assimilation was hard in these circumstances, but what is surprising is the success of technical schools in recruiting natives to serve the administration and defence of colonies. Charles Mangin felt pressed in 1910 to praise the *tirailleurs sénégalais*, for 'la conquête de l'Ouest Africain est leur oeuvre; elles ont donné à la France un territoire plus vaste que l'Europe et peuplé de 20 millions d'habitants.'<sup>42</sup>

However, the only serious force in assimilating African territories to the lifestyles of their European masters was the presence of large numbers of European settlers on the ground. It is not surprising that the two areas of Africa which were the most European by the turn of the twentieth century were the Union of South Africa and Algeria, each of which had a very large European population as early as the middle of the century - Cape Colony had 100,000 British while Algeria had a European population of 200,000, just under half of which were French. Confiscations of land freed more space for settlers, and created the conditions needed for French Algerians to demand genuine assimilation and integration with metropolitan France. As was said in the early 1840s, 'It is vital to legislate the incorporation of Algeria as an integral part of its territory. Neither the press nor the settlers must rest without winning this point.'<sup>43</sup> As Prevost-Paradol commented, 'it was necessary to bring in laws designed exclusively to favour the expansion of the French colony, leaving the Arabs to fight, as best they could, on equal

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<sup>38</sup> cited in Gifford & Weiskel *African Education in a Colonial Context* p.677

<sup>39</sup> cited in Gifford & Weiskel *African Education in a Colonial Context* p.687

<sup>40</sup> cited in Gifford & Weiskel *African Education in a Colonial Context* p.691

<sup>41</sup> Ageron *Modern Algeria* p.75

<sup>42</sup> cited in Obichere *French Authority in West Africa 1880-1900* p.443

<sup>43</sup> Ageron *Modern Algeria* p.26

terms, in the battle of life.<sup>44</sup> However, the increased presence of Europeans on African soil only went so far in creating a situation where natives sought to identify themselves with the colonial rulers. As long as governments maintained a policy of supporting white settlers on the land, they would never genuinely create an assimilated culture, since white and black would never live next door to each other. As long as Africa still remained profoundly rural this situation continued, since natives would not experience the same urbanised, service-sector and consumer-driven society as was the norm of Europeans in this period. Arguably the most productive period in Algerian history of genuine assimilation came after the abandonment of the official colonial policy to this end. As the proportion of Arabs living in towns increased from 6.9% in 1881 to 10.8% in 1931 - for the first time Arab and European populations started to live side by side. The new juxtaposition and mixing of Arab and European society is reinforced by the fact that at this time, Arabs also first started to migrate to metropolitan France - 23,000 in 1923. European civilisation was to a large extent one which did not rely on traditional cultural values such as religion and language, but one which was based on an industrialised, urbanised and consumer-driven capitalism which was unknown in Africa at that time. Assimilation to this civilisation was not one which small but earnest groups of Europeans could provide in a foreign land, and in fact they often attempted to prevent concentrations of Africans living together in cities. However, assimilation did gradually come into Africa, not through conscious effort, but instead by the process of urbanisation - requiring new bourgeois and urban trades, and the related skills and educational achievements needed to acquire them. Urbanisation also allowed the free and unhindered flow of foreign goods which Europeans were so adept at providing - consumer products and marketing techniques; construction workers and architecture; machinery and the mechanisation of African life urban and rural. The successful assimilation of Africa was never a conscious project, but rather a reactive economic one - which France with a continued economic predominance backed by a self-interested aid and development policy was always able to benefit from more than Britain. When French Africa opened itself to foreign products and opinions, it was always the French who they turned to; in British Africa, they turned to the world at large.

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<sup>44</sup> Ageron *Modern Algeria* p.45