

## PRIMARY SOURCE 1: Letter from Menelik II

***From 1889 to 1913, Emperor Menelik II ruled Ethiopia, the only African nation to resist colonization. He wrote the following letter to the caliph of the Sudan to express his opposition to European expansion and his desire to strengthen his alliance with the Sudan. How did Menelik II intend to resist European attempts to colonize his country?***

This is to inform you that the Europeans who are present round the White Nile with the English have come out from both the east and the west, and intended to enter between my country and yours and to separate and divide us. And I, when I heard of their plan, dispatched an expedition, sending detachments in five directions. The group [of Europeans] who are near are the English and the French, who are located in the direction from which the Belgians came. And do you remember when I sent to you Kantiba Jiru, you wrote to me by him that you have men in the direction from which the Belgians came?; and I ordered the chiefs of [my] troops that if they met with them, they were to parley with them and explain [my] intention. And now I have ordered my troops to advance towards the White Nile. And perhaps [if] you heard the news from merchants or from others you might misunderstand my action, [so now] I have written to you so that you would understand the object [of this expedition].

And you look to yourself, and do not let the Europeans enter between us. Be strong, lest if the Europeans enter our midst a great disaster befall us and our children have no rest. And if one of the Europeans comes to you as a traveler, do your utmost to send him away in peace; and do not listen to rumors against me. All my intention is to increase my friendship with you, and that our countries may be protected from [their] enemies. *from G.N. Sanderson, "The Foreign Policy of Negus Menelik" in the Journal of African History, Vol. 5, 1964. Reprinted in Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., ed., The Horizon History of Africa (New York: American Heritage, 1971), 429.*

### Discussion Questions

#### **Summarizing**

1. According to Menelik II, what was the Europeans' plan?
2. What steps did Menelik II take in response to the Europeans' plan?
3. **Making Inferences** Based on your reading of this letter, what can you infer about the methods some European countries used to control African land and peoples?
4. **Is this source for or against Imperialism, and how do you know?**

**PRIMARY SOURCE 2: Letter Opposing the English  
by Moulavy Syad Kutb Shah Sahib**

***During British imperial rule in the 19th century, many Indians believed that the British were trying to force them to convert to Christianity. In a letter, Muslim leader Moulavy Syad Kutb Shah Sahib issued a warning to Hindus and Muslims in order to protect them from the British. The following excerpt from his letter reflects Indians' resentment toward the British because of religious differences. What course of action did Moulavy Syad Shah recommend Indians should take?***

The English are people who overthrow all religions. You should understand well the object of destroying the religions of Hindustan; they have for a long time been causing books to be written and circulated throughout the country by the hands of their priests, and, exercising their authority, have brought out numbers of preachers to spread their own tenets: this has been learned from one of their own trusted agents. . . . [The English] ordered the Brahmans and others of their army to bite cartridges, in the making up of which fat had been used. The Mussulman [Muslim] soldiers perceived that by this expedient the religion of the Brahmans and Hindus only was in danger, but nevertheless they also refused to bite them. On this the English now resolved on ruining the faith of both. . . . It is now my firm conviction that if these English continue in Hindustan they will kill every one in the country, and will utterly overthrow our religions. . . . Under these circumstances, I would ask, what course have you decided on to protect your lives and faith? Were your views and mine the same, we might destroy them entirely with a very little trouble; and if we do so, we shall protect our religions and save the country. . . . All you Hindus are hereby solemnly adjured, by your faith in Ganges, Tulsī, and Saligram; and all you Mussulmans, by your belief in God and the Koran, as these English are the common enemy of both, to unite in considering their slaughter extremely expedient, for by this alone will the lives and faith of both be saved. It is expedient, then, that you should coalesce and slay them. The slaughter of kine [cows] is regarded by the Hindus as a great insult to their religion. To prevent this a solemn compact and agreement has been entered into by all the Mahomedan chiefs of Hindustan, binding themselves, that if the Hindus will come forward to slay the English, the Mahomedans will from that very day put a stop to the slaughter of cows, . . . but if the Hindus will not gird their loins to kill the English, but will try to save them, they will be as guilty in the sight of God as though they had committed the sins of killing cows and eating flesh. Perhaps the English may, for their own ends, try to assure the Hindus that as the Mussulmans have consented to give up killing cows from respect for the Hindu religion, they will solemnly engage to do the same, and will ask the Hindus to join them against the Mussulmans; but no sensible man will be gulled by such deceit, for the solemn promises and professions of the English are always deceitful and interested. Once their ends are gained they will infringe their engagements, for deception has ever been habitual with them, and the treachery they have always practiced on the people of Hindustan is known to rich and poor. Do not therefore give heed to what they may say. . . . I trust you will all write answers approving of what has been proposed herein. This letter has been printed under the direction of Moulavy Syad Kutb Shah Sahib, at the Bahaduri press, in the city of Bareilly.

*from Selections from the Records of the Government of Punjab and its Dependencies, New Series, No. VII (Lahore: Punjab Printing Company, Ltd., 1870), 173–175. Reprinted in Peter N. Stearns, ed., Documents in World History, Vol. II (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), 70–72.*

**Discussion Questions**

***Clarifying***

1. According to this letter, why were the English a threat to Indians?
2. What course of action did Moulavy Syad Shah believe Indians should take against the English?
3. **Analyzing Causes and Recognizing Effects** What connections, if any, do you perceive between the attitudes expressed in this letter and the outbreak of the Sepoy Mutiny?
4. **Is this source for or against Imperialism, and how do you know?**

### PRIMARY SOURCE 3: In Favor of Imperialism

***While running for the Senate in 1898, Indiana’s Albert Beveridge gave a campaign speech in which he explained why the United States should keep the Philippines. As you read this excerpt, consider his arguments in favor of U.S. imperialism.***

It is a noble land that God has given us; a land that can feed and clothe the world; a land whose coastlines would enclose half the countries of Europe; a land set like a sentinel between the two imperial oceans of the globe, a greater England with a nobler destiny. It is a mighty people that He has planted on this soil; a people sprung from the most masterful blood of history; a people perpetually revitalized by the virile, man-producing working folk of all the earth; a people imperial by virtue of their power, by right of their institutions, by authority of their heaven-directed purposes—the propagandists and not the misers of liberty.

It is a glorious history our God has bestowed upon His chosen people; a history whose keynote was struck by the Liberty Bell; a history heroic with faith in our mission and our future; a history of statesmen who flung the boundaries of the republic out into unexplored lands and savage wildernesses; a history of soldiers who carried the flag across the blazing deserts and through the ranks of hostile mountains, even to the gates of sunset; a history of a multiplying people who overran a continent in half a century; a history of prophets who saw the consequences of evils inherited from the past and of martyrs who died to save us from them; a history divinely logical, in the process of whose tremendous reasoning we find ourselves today.

Therefore, in this campaign, the question is larger than a party question. It is an American question. It is a world question. Shall the American people continue in their restless march toward the commercial supremacy of the world? Shall free institutions broaden their blessed reign as the children of liberty wax in strength, until the empire of our principles is established over the hearts of all mankind? . . . God bless the soldiers of 1898, children of the heroes of 1861, descendants of the heroes of 1776! In the halls of history they will stand side by side with those elder sons of glory, and the opposition to the government at Washington shall not deny them. No! They shall not be robbed of the honor due them, nor shall the republic be robbed of what they won for their country. For William McKinley is continuing the policy that Jefferson began, Monroe continued, Seward advanced, Grant promoted, Harrison championed, and the growth of the republic has demanded.

Hawaii is ours; Puerto Rico is to be ours; at the prayer of the people, Cuba will finally be ours; in the islands of the East, even to the gates of Asia, coaling stations are to be ours; at the very least the flag of a liberal government is to float over the Philippines, and I pray God it may be the banner that Taylor unfurled in Texas and Frémont carried to the coast—the stars and stripes of glory.

The march of the flag! . . . Think of the thousands of Americans who will pour into Hawaii and Puerto Rico when the republic’s laws cover those islands with justice and safety! Think of the tens of thousands of Americans who will invade mine and field and forest in the Philippines when a liberal government, protected and controlled by this republic, if not the government of the republic itself, shall establish order and equity there! Think of the hundreds of thousands of Americans who will build a soap-and-water, common-school civilization of energy and industry in Cuba when a government of law replaced the double reign of anarchy and tyranny. Think of the prosperous millions that empress of islands will support when, obedient to the law of political gravitation, her people ask for the highest honor liberty can bestow, the sacred Order of the Stars and Stripes, the citizenship of the Great Republic!

*from Thomas B. Reed, ed., Modern Eloquence, Vol. XI (Philadelphia, 1903), 224–243.*

#### Discussion Questions

1. Whose hand does Beveridge see in America’s destiny?
2. According to Beveridge, what would Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Cuba gain from their association with the United States?
3. What arguments does Beveridge give for the expansion of the American empire?
4. **Is this source for or against Imperialism, and how do you know?**

## PRIMARY SOURCE 4: British Contract with an African King

***In 1888 Cecil Rhodes sent three agents of his South Africa Company—Charles Rudd, Rochfort Maguire, and Francis Thompson—to see the king of the Ndebele people. The mining company agents persuaded the African king Lo Bengula to sign a contract granting the British mining rights. Later, Lo Bengula said that he had been tricked into signing the agreement, and he wrote a letter of protest to Queen Victoria of Great Britain. What were the terms of this contract?***

Know all men by these presents, that whereas Charles Dunell Rudd, of Kimberley; Rochfort Maguire, of London; and Francis Robert Thompson, of Kimberley, hereinafter called the grantees, have covenanted and agreed, and do hereby covenant and agree, to pay to me, my heirs and successors, the sum of one hundred pounds sterling, British currency, on the first day of every lunar month; and, further, to deliver at my royal kraal one thousand Martini-Henry breech-loading rifles, together with one hundred thousand rounds of suitable ball cartridge, five hundred of the said rifles and fifty thousand of the said cartridges to be ordered from England forthwith and delivered with reasonable dispatch, and the remainder of the said rifles and cartridges to be delivered as soon as the said grantees shall have commenced to work mining machinery within my territory; and further, to deliver on the Zambesi River a steamboat with guns suitable for defensive purposes upon the said river, or in lieu of the said steamboat, should I so elect to pay to me the sum of five hundred pounds sterling, British currency. On the execution of these presents, I, Lo Bengula, King of Matabeleland, Mashonaland, and other adjoining territories, in exercise of my council of indunas, do hereby grant and assign unto the said grantees, their heirs, representatives, and assigns, jointly and severally, the complete and exclusive charge over all metals and minerals situated and contained in my kingdoms, principalities, and dominions, together with full power to do all things that they may deem necessary to win and procure the same, and to hold, collect, and enjoy the profits and revenues, if any, derivable from the said metals and minerals, subject to the aforesaid payment; and whereas I have been much molested [of] late by diverse persons seeking and desiring to obtain grants and concessions of land and mining rights in my territories, I do hereby authorise the said grantees, their heirs, representatives, and assigns, to take all necessary and lawful steps to exclude from my kingdom, principalities, and dominions all persons seeking land, metals, minerals, or mining rights therein, and I do hereby undertake to render them all such needful assistance as they may from time to time require for the exclusion of such persons, and to grant no concessions of land or mining rights from and after this date without their consent and concurrence; provided that, if at any time the said monthly payment of one hundred pounds shall cease [the agreement's end dates from] the last-made payment.

*from* Sir Lewis Mitchell, *The Life of the Right Honorable Cecil John Rhodes*, Vol. 1 (London: 1910), 244–245. Reprinted in Peter N. Stearns, ed., *Documents in World History*, Vol. II (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), 102–103.

### Discussion Questions

#### ***Recognizing Facts and Details***

1. What was the king to receive from the British mining company?
2. What did the king agree to give the British mining company?
3. ***Drawing Conclusions*** Why do you think the British mining company agents wanted to obtain mining rights through a contract rather than taking them by force?
4. **Is this source for or against Imperialism, and how do you know?**