The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa

Frederick Lugard, later Lord Lugard (1858–1945), was a military man, educated at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, and an administrator of colonial territories. He was involved in the conquests of British East Africa and Nigeria, serving as high commissioner of Northern Nigeria from 1900 to 1906. He returned to Nigeria in 1912 and carried out the federation of Nigeria's northern and southern territories in 1914. He served as governor-general of Nigeria from 1914 to 1919. In 1922, following his retirement from colonial service, he published **The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa,** ***a work that outlined his views on how European colonial powers should rule over African people. The excerpt presented here is from the conclusion to this book.***

Let it be admitted at the outset that European brains, capital, and energy have not been, and never will be, expended in developing the resources of Africa from motives of pure philanthropy; that Europe is in Africa for the mutual benefit of her own industrial classes, and of the native races in their progress to a higher plane; that the benefit can be made reciprocal, and that it is the aim and desire of civilised administration to fulfil this dual mandate.

By railways and roads, by reclamation of swamps and irrigation of deserts, and by a system of fair trade and competition, we have added to the prosperity and wealth of these lands, and checked famine and disease. We have put an end to the awful misery of the slave-trade and inter-tribal war, to human sacrifice and the ordeals of the witch-doctor. Where these things survive they are severely suppressed. We are endeavouring to teach the native races to conduct their own affairs with justice and humanity, and to educate them alike in letters and in industry.

. . .

As Roman imperialism laid the foundations of modern civilisation, and led the wild barbarians of these islands [the British Isles] along the path of progress, so in Africa to-day we are repaying the debt, and bringing to the dark places of the earth, the abode of barbarism and cruelty, the torch of culture and progress, while ministering to the material needs of our own civilisation. In this task the nations of Europe have pledged themselves to co-operation by a solemn covenant. Towards the common goal each will advance by the methods most consonant with its national genius. British methods have not perhaps in all cases produced ideal results, but I am profoundly convinced that there can be no question but that British rule has promoted the happiness and welfare of the primitive races. Let those who question it examine the results impartially. If there is unrest, and a desire for independence, as in India and Egypt, it is because we have taught the value of liberty and freedom, which for centuries these peoples had not known. Their very discontent is a measure of their progress.

We hold these countries because it is the genius of our race to colonise, to trade, and to govern. The task in which England is engaged in the tropics—alike in Africa and in the East—has become part of her tradition, and she has ever given of her best in the cause of liberty and civilisation. There will always be those who cry aloud that the task is being badly done, that it does not need doing, that we can get more profit by leaving others to do it, that it brings evil to subject races and breeds profiteers at home. These were not the principles which prompted our forefathers, and secured for us the place we hold in the world to-day in trust for those who shall come after us.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

- What views does Lugard have of precolonial African peoples?
- Do you regard Lugard's views toward Africans as racist? If so, on what grounds does Lugard hold such views?
- How does Lugard think that European colonial rulers will improve African lives?
- In what ways does Lugard believe that Europeans will benefit as much as Africans from imperialism?

Source: The Right Hon. Sir F. D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1922), pp. 617, 618–619).