



The Poetry of Decolonization: Pan- Africanism through Poetry

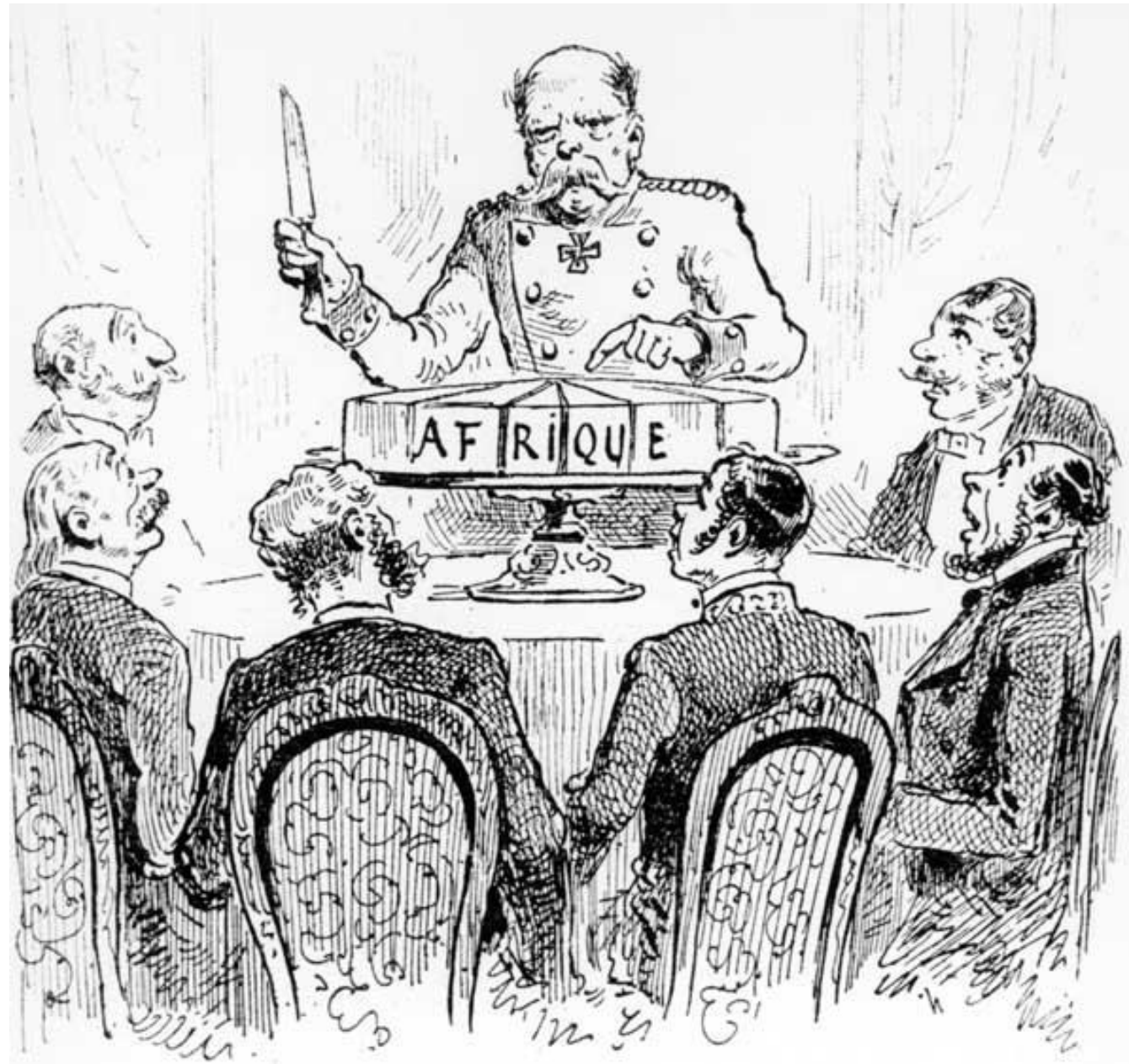
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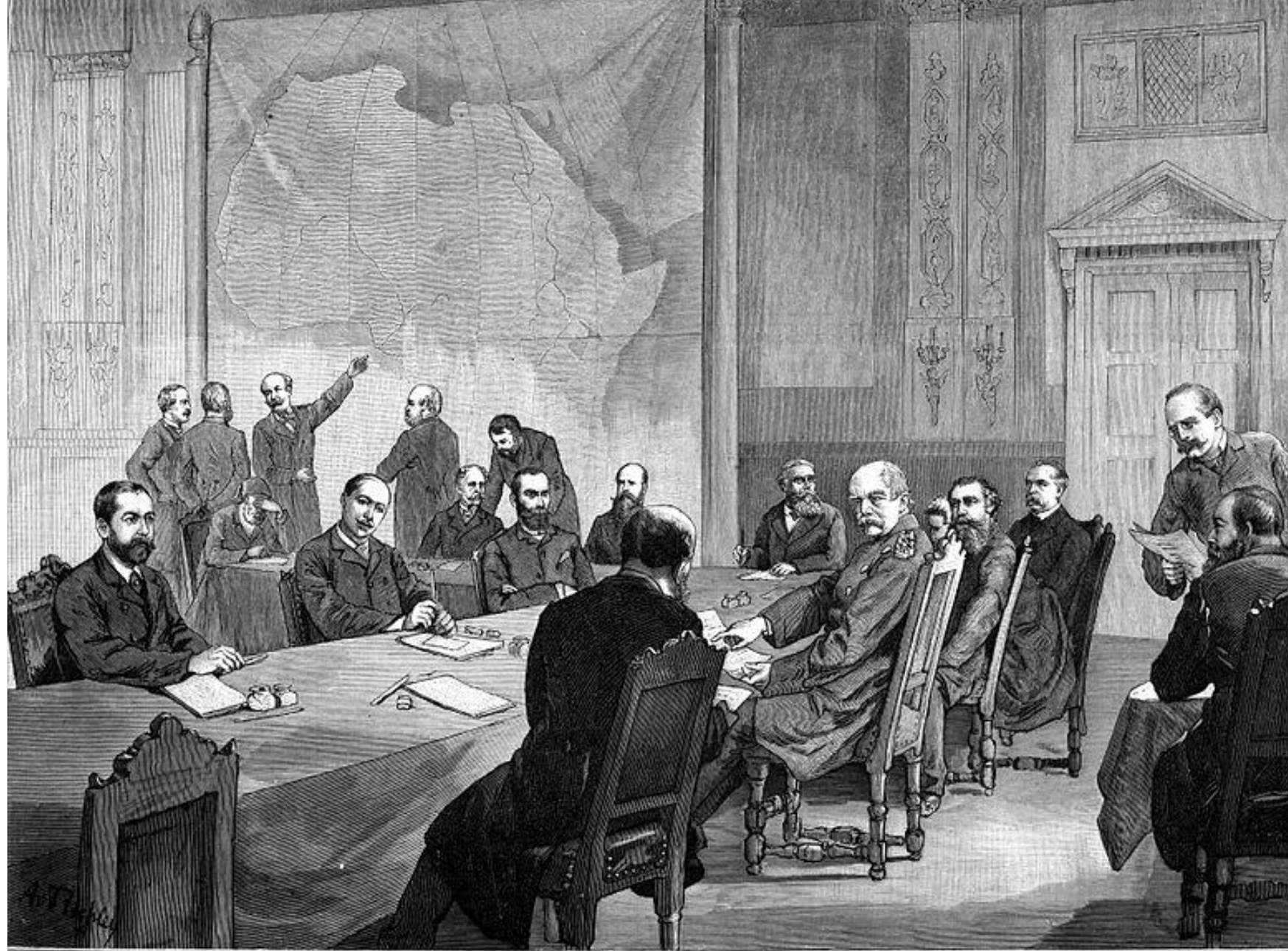
@BigSkyHistory



Source: Wikimedia Commons



Source: The Royal African Society



v. Lamberti, de Castro, Marquis v. Grolsch, Graf de Kauray, Kellin, v. Nesselrode, Henry Sanford, John Bunsard, v. Dieb, Friedrich v. Bode, Graf Wilhelm Dismarck, Graf Seydewitz, Graf Sagnik, Graf Grolsch, Graf Hatzfeldt, v. D. Stamm, Haidob, Graf Demant, Graf Sychow.

Source: Wikimedia Commons



Source: Mary Evans Picture Library

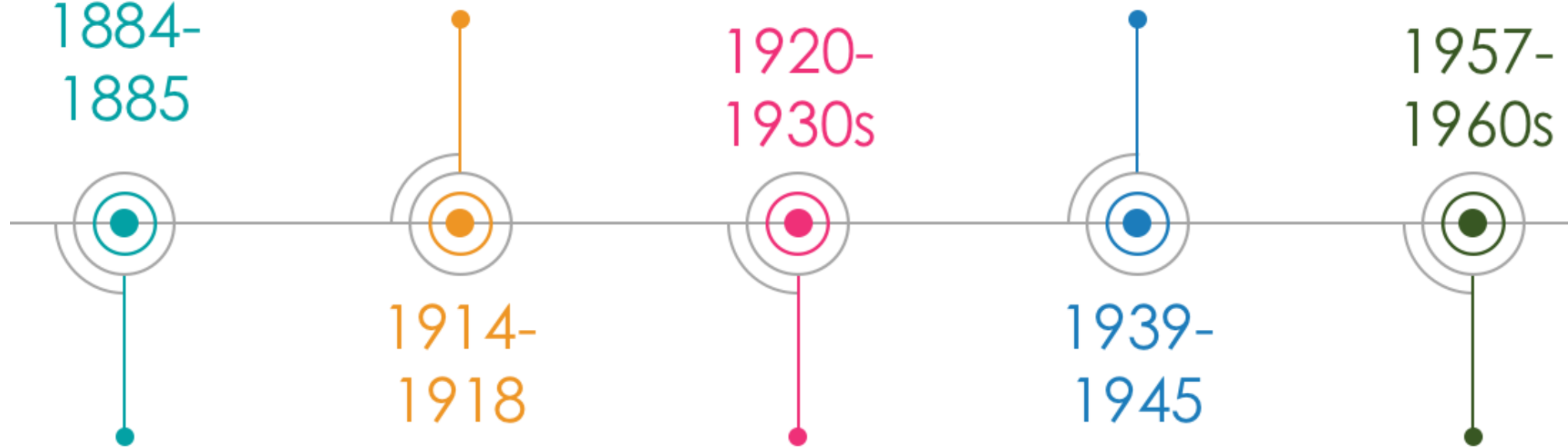
The normal emphasis . . .

- European colonial expansion often gets heavy emphasis
- Scramble for Africa . . .
- Berlin Conference . . .
- Resistance tends to take minimal role

Shifting the emphasis . . .

- If we foreground resistance, colonialism is present as context
- The reverse is not always the case . . .
- **What would/could resistance to colonialism look like?**
- **What forms of resistance were possible?**

Timeline



- Build it!
- What do we notice?
- Trends? Questions? Observations?
- I See, I Think, I Wonder

Source for uprisings: Worlds Together, Worlds Apart

Source for labor unrest: The African Experience: From “Lucy” to Mandela



Source: British Museum

- Masses of people displeased
- Interconnected by shared experiences
- With growing skills

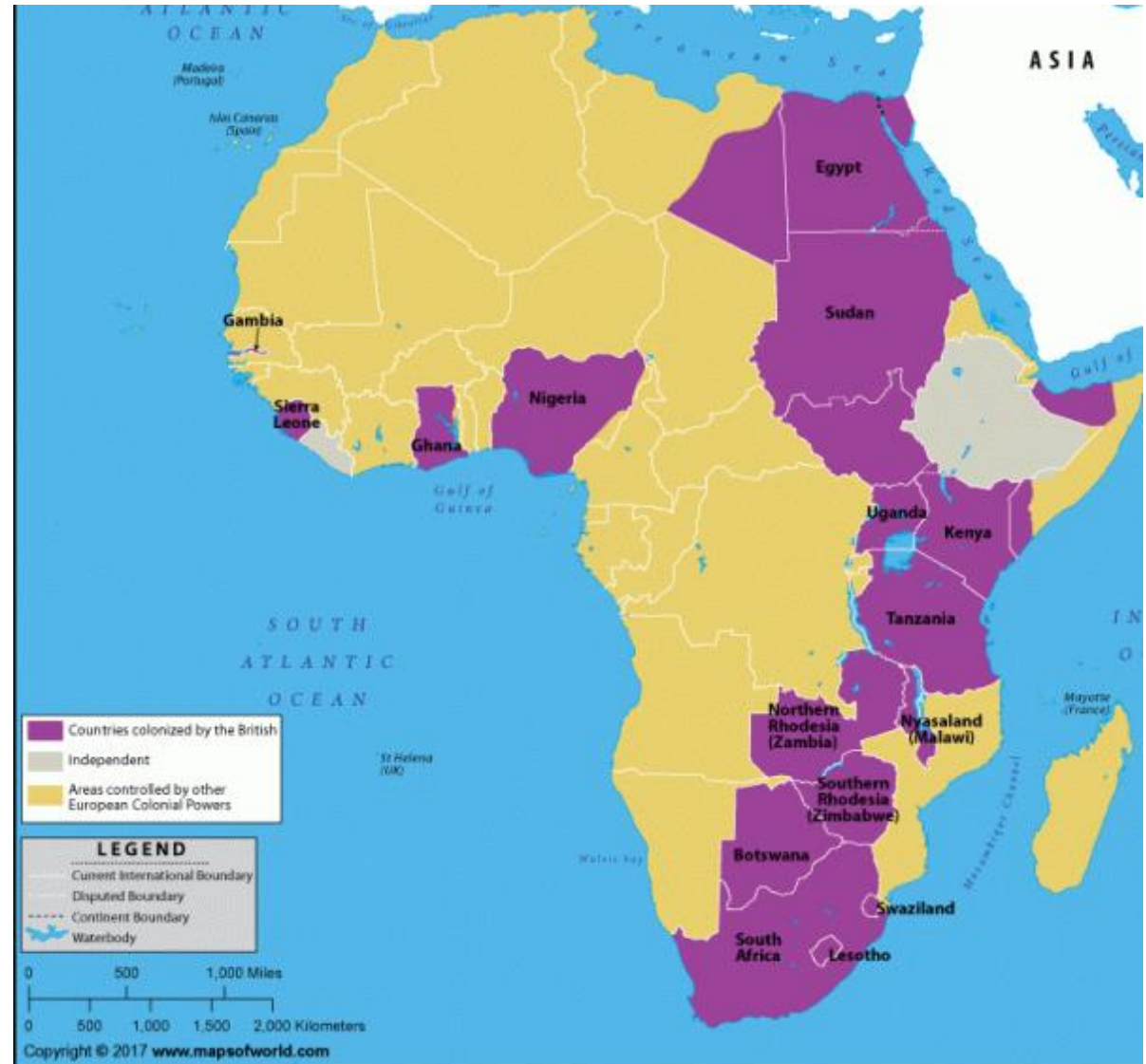
- Need direction
 - Intellectual guidance & direction

“The railway strike has proved that Africans have been born. The old Africa of tribalism and selfishness has died away. Africans realize as never before that united they stand and divided they fall. The days when a white man could exploit us at will are gone and gone forever.”

- Jasper Savanhu, 1945 on strike in Rhodesia

“The Parable of the Eagle” & “Is There Anybody Here?”

- Read individually
- Prepare to explain the following:
- What is the gist?
- What is the mindset of the colonizer?
- What is the mindset of those chafing under colonialism?
- What is the common theme shared by these stories?



Négritude

- Emerges in Paris, 1930s
- Aimé Césaire
- Léon Damas
- Léopold Senghor



Source: NY Public Library



Source: Assemblée nationale

- Read Césaire's "Memorandum on My Martinique" (p. 4)

Négritude

- Resist assimilation
- Assert the uniqueness & beauty of African heritage
- Affirm shared black identity & African heritage
- Reclaim African self-determination, self-reliance, & self-respect

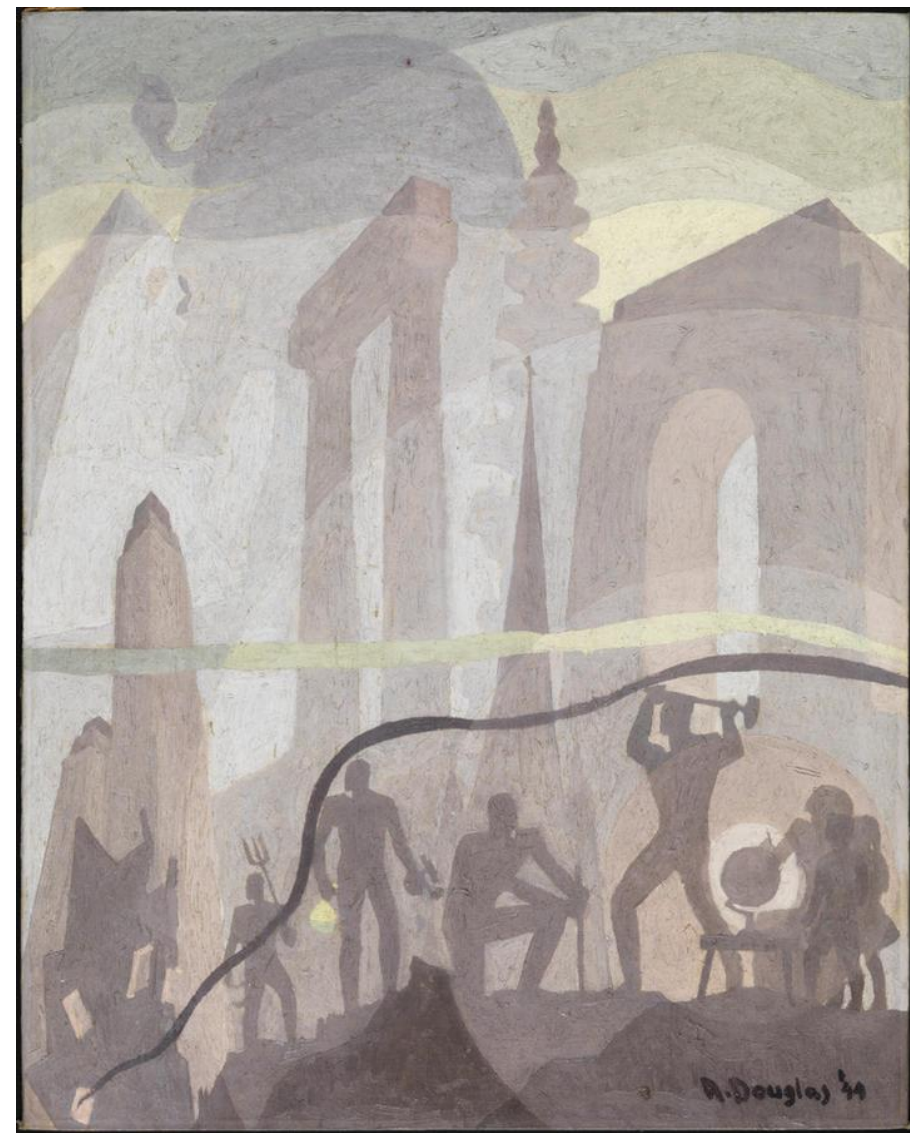


Source: AFP

- “Far from seeing in one’s blackness inferiority, one accepts it; one lays claim to it with pride; one cultivates it lovingly.”
 - Léopold Senghor
- **Tapped into what pre-existing systems of thought and expression?**

Harlem Renaissance

- “I refuse to compromise and see blacks as anything less than a proud and majestic people.”
 - Aaron Douglas



Source: Aaron Douglas, Building More Stately Mansions, Rhode Island School of Design

- “Yet I must render to you, Negro Americans, the merit of having invented, before all others, perhaps not the word but certainly the concept, the ideology of Négritude . . . without overlooking the role played by Haiti, the fact remains that you were the ones, between the years 1920 and 1925, who started the Negro Renaissance and gave birth to the New Negro; conscious of his négritude, determined to live it: to defend it and make it famous.”

- Léopold Senghor, 1966

Senghor considered Claude McKay “the real inventor of négritude.”

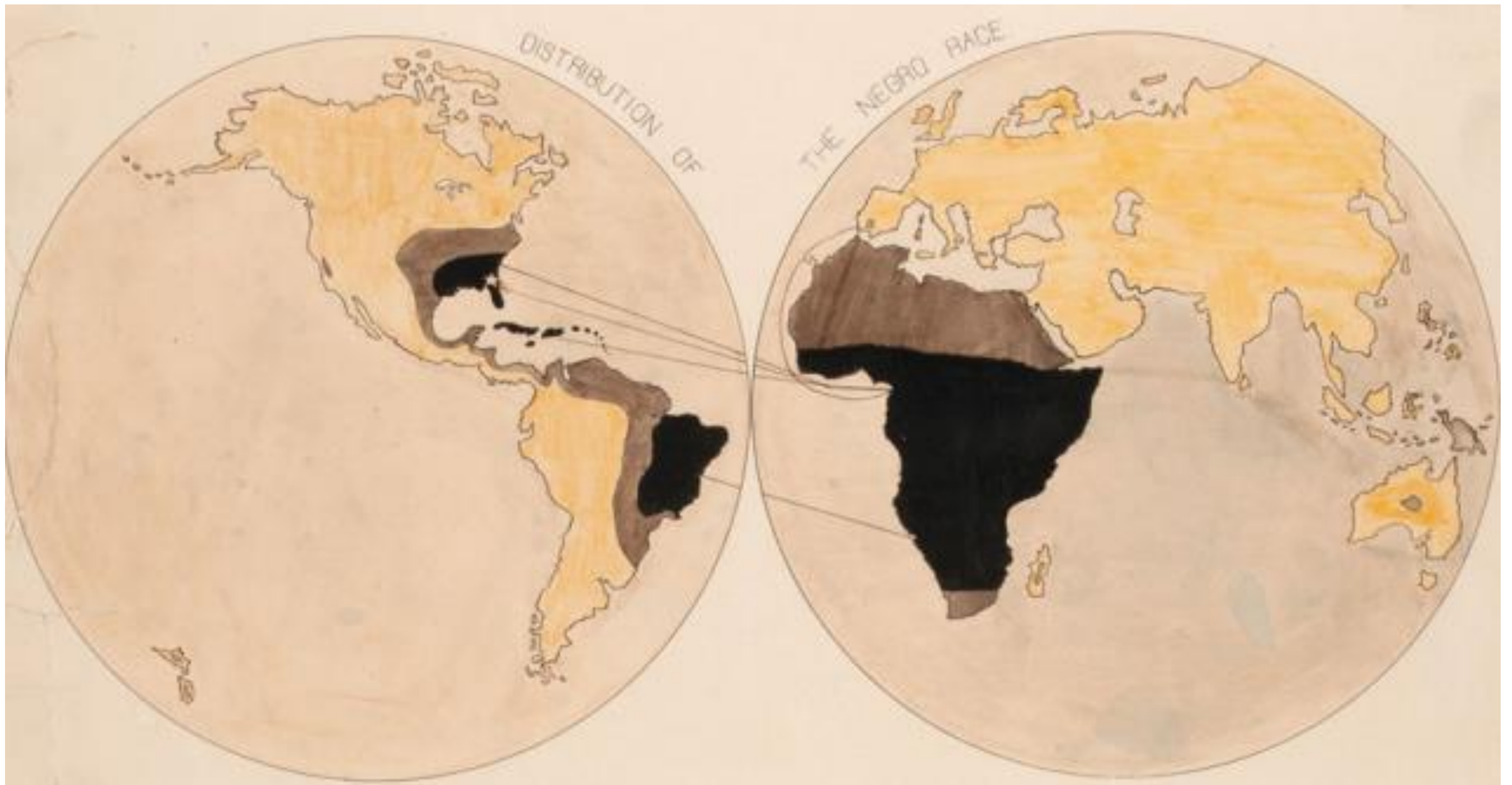
In Négritude, also connections to . . .



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Pan-Africanism

- 1919, Paris
- Built from earlier efforts in US & UK
- Adopted resolution calling “for the international protection of the natives of Africa.”



Source: W.E.B Du Bois's Data Portraits

From pages 4 & 5 read one poem in depth

- Choices:
- “Africa Heart”
- “Limbo”
- “Whitewash”



Source: Britannica

- David Diop's "Africa"
- Read with a partner
- Graphic organizer
 - Contrasting viewpoints:
 - Sticky note discussion
 - Put this poem in conversation with:
 - 1955: British Governor of Nigeria
 - 1893: Lord Lugard
- "Slowly its fruits grow to have; the bitter taste of liberty."
- New Nations in Africa
 - Global interest & connections

Students writing poetry . . .



You say we are a “disease of the heart,”
Our hearts have been tested through the snows of Loushan Pass,
Marching with straw sandals
The remains of our comrades fertilize fields from Jiangxi to Yan’an.
New China’s crops grow tall watered by their blood.

With his pen of power, our leader inspires, challenges,
Lifts us through the Snowy Mountains.

Frozen, outnumbered, our bloody feet in straw sandals stumble still higher.

From certain defeat,

To narrow escape,

To six thousand-mile retreat,

To righteous victory.

On our backs we carry the burden of our nation's future,

While you carry our nation's history away.

Robbed of our riches, we return to the people,

The true treasure of our land.



You say we “can no more be a citizen than could a coyote.”

The newspaper that carries these words spreads on railroads we built.

The mansions your readers take in such lies, paid for by gold we mined.

The food on your table, grown in our gardens.

Clothes on your back, washed by our hands.

What is to be done?

“The Chinaman must go!”

We say no.

We stay and fight for belonging in the land we built.