

Imperialism: Sample of Native Treaty

When the European powers (particularly Britain, Germany, France) 'scrambled' for parts of Africa in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a common device for securing territories was by so-called 'treaty', often a ready-made blank document carried by colonial agents presented to local rulers for signing. Trickery, false promises and intimidation were the rule during this period in which virtually the entire continent was carved up in the interests of the powers. The following is such a document, with appropriate blank spaces, as employed by agents of the British Royal Niger Company.

- We, the undersigned Chiefs of , with the view of bettering the condition of our country and people, do this day cede to the Royal Niger Company (Chartered and Limited), for ever, the whole of our territory extending from
- We also give to the said Royal Niger Company (Chartered and Limited) full power to settle all native disputes arising from any cause whatever, and we pledge ourselves not to enter into any war with other tribes without the sanction of the said Royal Niger Company (Chartered and Limited).
- We understand that the said Royal Niger Company (Chartered and Limited) have full power to mine, farm, and build in any portion of our country.
- We bind ourselves not to have any intercourse[i.e., transactions or communications] with any strangers or foreigners except through the said Royal Niger Company (Chartered and Limited).
- In consideration of the foregoing, the said Royal Niger Company (Chartered and Limited) bind themselves not to interfere with any of the native laws or customs of the country, consistently with the maintenance of order and good government
- The said Royal Niger Company (Chartered and Limited) agree to pay native owners of land a reasonable amount for any portion they may require.
- The said Royal Niger Company (Chartered and Limited) bind themselves to protect the said Chiefs from the attacks of any neighbouring aggressive tribes.
- The said Royal Niger Company (Chartered and Limited) also agree to pay the said Chiefs native value.
- We, the undersigned witnesses, do hereby solemnly declare that the Chiefs whose names are placed opposite their respective crosses have in our presence affixed their crosses of their own free will and consent, and that the said has in our presence affixed his signature.

Done in triplicate at thisday of , 188. .

Declaration by Interpreter.

I, of , do hereby solemnly declare that I am well acquainted with the language of the country, and that of theday of , 188. , I truly and faithfully explained the above Agreement to all the Chiefs present, and that they understood its meaning.