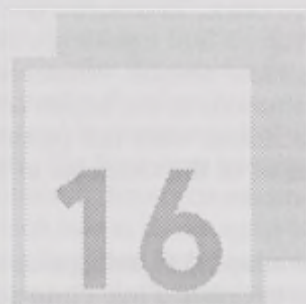




The decolonisation of Africa

African revol- ution

In 1945, when the Second World War ended, Africa had only four independent states: in the south the Union of South Africa enjoyed dominion status, in West Africa, Liberia managed to survive the onslaught of imperialism, in Northeast Africa Ethiopia's sovereignty was restored in 1941, while Egypt had a qualified independence – it still housed British occupational forces in the Suez Canal zone. Fifteen years later, in 1960, a year that has been characterised as Africa's 'anno mirabile', or wonder year,¹ the continent had no fewer than 23 independent states and during the 1960s another 17 joined their ranks. An African revolution was indeed in the offing. The post-war years were regarded as a period of 'development and welfare',² but they were also characterised by a realisation by all but one colonial power that the necessity to retain the colonies at all costs had disappeared with the 'civilising mission'. It was no longer economically sound or in the best interests of the mother countries to cling to their colonial possessions. The exception was Portugal, who hung on to the colonial link – perhaps because it could not afford to decolonise.

THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION

Wafd govern- ment

In the years that followed the Second World War, the colonies in Northeast Africa and the Maghrib advanced to independence much quicker than the territories south of the Sahara desert. Egypt, although unilaterally declared independent by the British in 1922,

led the way in this regard. This was because of its close relationship with the Middle East where Arab countries such as Syria and Lebanon had attained full autonomy during the war. Egypt was a vast centre of British power, but while the fortunes of the struggle in North Africa fluctuated, opinion in Egypt was divided between loyalty for and opposition to the Allied cause. To ensure a favourable position, the British had to bully the unfriendly King Farouk into installing a Wafd government in 1942, when the German threat was at its most serious. Whatever the general opinion on Farouk, Egyptian nationalists were furious at the British action, because Farouk was the personification of Egypt. The British were not particularly interested in the country's domestic politics – the defeat of the Germans in the Libyan desert was their main concern.

Conditions in Egypt

The new Wafd government adopted an ambiguous attitude towards the British. It was sensitive to the fact that the British had put it into power but it also realised that it was dependent upon them for support against a king who would not hesitate to dismiss it. Like the monarchy, the government was riddled with corruption and scandal. Inflation was also rampant, and this caused much public discontent as landowners grew richer and merchants and industrialists prospered from supplying the foreigners with goods and services related to the war. In contrast, the majority of Egyptians sank ever deeper into poverty. The fellahin or peasants lived under appalling conditions. They owned no land and 'were amongst the most downtrodden peoples of the world'.³ Poverty and political killings were everyday occurrences in Egyptian life and extra-parliamentary bodies such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which were strongly opposed to the British presence, grew daily in stature.

Anglo-Egyptian relations

But on one course of action all parties were in agreement: the complete evacuation of the British and restoration of unity with the Sudan would constitute a just reward for the services that the Egyptians had rendered to Britain during the war. This was a concession that even the British Labour Party, with its desire to maintain Britain's dominant position in the Middle East, was obliged to make. In 1946 the Labour Party was confronted with anti-British strikes, demonstrations and violent rioting led by the Muslim Brotherhood, the Wafd and the communists. This convinced the Labour Party of the need to negotiate, but although they agreed to withdraw from the canal zone by 1949, the questions of regional defence and control of the Nile were avoided and the British instituted steps towards self-government for the Sudan. Anglo-Egyptian relations remained strained.

Muslim Brotherhood

Events in Palestine, where the state of Israel was formed in May 1948, precipitated a further crisis in Egypt. The country joined the other Arab states in a war against Israel, but the war was a military failure. This increased popular dissatisfaction with the Wafd and King Farouk, especially when it was revealed that defective arms were knowingly supplied to the Egyptian forces by corrupt contractors. The popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood rose sharply because it was the only unit that emerged from the struggle with distinction. Their chances of realising their revolutionary aims improved markedly. When frustrated Egyptians turned their wrath on the British garrison in the canal

zone, the Wafd replied by banning the Muslim Brotherhood and re-opened negotiations on the canal zone with the British in 1951.

Anti-British demonstrations

Difficulties in the Sudan, where nationalists insisted on self-government, soon resurfaced. To save face, the Egyptian government revoked the 1899 condominium and declared Farouk king of both Egypt and the Sudan. Because of the Cold War the British were less inclined to withdraw from the canal zone, and tension rose as they increased their troops there. Consequently the Egyptian government unbanned the Muslim Brotherhood, who took the lead in strong anti-British demonstrations, subjecting them to food and labour boycotts. The Suez base became a target of sabotage in which the Egyptian police was also involved. Strong countermeasures were taken in January 1952 which sparked anger and mob rule in Cairo, again led by the Muslim Brotherhood and assisted by the fascist Young Egyptian Organisation and other militant groups. British property was the aim of these revolutionaries, but Farouk delayed in instructing the army to restore order, eventually doing so shortly before the British moved to intervene from the canal zone. The Wafd government fell and moves to form a new administration failed until the unknown Free Officers' Movement under Major General Muhammad Neguib staged a coup on the night of 22 and 23 July 1952.

Nasser

Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser was the real driving force behind the coup. As a youth he dreamed of freeing his homeland from the British yoke and, together with his school friends, he had been swept along by rampant Egyptian nationalism. Born on 15 January 1918, he completed his schooling in Alexandria before joining the Egyptian Military Academy at the age of 19. He was convinced that the only road to liberation was through the army. He studied the lives of historical figures such as Hannibal, Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Gandhi, Rousseau and Voltaire, while people such as Ahmed el Arabi, Mustapha Kemal and Zaghul and the revolutionary movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries fired his imagination. But the central driving force of his life was his hatred of the British and of the Egyptian monarchy. When he left the Military Academy in 1938 as a second lieutenant, he was convinced that the Egyptian army would have to be reformed if it was to drive the British from the country. For this

Free Officers' Movement

reason in 1939 he established the Free Officers' Movement as an underground organisation. In 1940, during the early part of the war, Nasser found himself in the fighting lines at El Alamein. While there he continued his revolutionary activities, even making contact with the Germans and the Italians. The firm hold that the British had on Egypt in 1942, when Farouk was forced to appoint a Wafd government, made the monarchy the first target of the movement. Nasser selected the members of the movement with great care in order to eliminate traitors. He also strove to further his position in the army. The higher his rank, he reasoned, the more influence he would be able to wield. By the end of the war he had advanced to the rank of major.

Military coup

The Free Officers' Movement continued to grow after the war and its numbers were swelled as members of the Muslim Brotherhood and some convinced Marxists joined its ranks. The humiliation suffered against Israel strengthened its position still further and the plan to rid Egypt of the king and the presence of the British took shape. The Free Officers moved cautiously into the public arena and General Neguib was ear-

marked to form a new government. Neguib had been wounded during the Israeli War of 1948, but emerged with a solid reputation. Although the Free Officers were not well known, no one hastened to defend the king during the coup of July 1952. By condemning colonialism and promising to divide the land of the rich among the fellahin, the Free Officers were assured of support. The military takeover, which forms part of a chain reaction in the Arab world which began in Damascus in 1949,⁴ was the first of its kind in Africa and created a precedent that was to be repeated regularly on the continent in the post-independence period.

Egyptian revolution

But the Free Officers' Movement was unprepared for the success it achieved – it had no aspirations to govern. Afterwards Nasser wrote that he saw the organisation's role as that of a vanguard whose responsibility would not have taken more than a few hours to complete.⁵ The first problem was how to deal with the king. Two alternatives were considered: execution or exile. Eventually the choice fell on exile, at which point honest politicians could take over. This was a naive view because no such politicians could be found, and within six months the coup had developed into the Egyptian revolution. On 18 June 1953 Egypt became a republic governed by the Revolutionary Command Council. This did not signify the end of the new government's domestic problems. The Muslim Brotherhood remained a rival movement and was too strong to be removed overnight. Only after the Brotherhood attempted to assassinate Nasser in 1954 were they decisively crushed. Neguib was removed under suspicion of cooperation and Nasser became prime minister. The new government also set out to purge the nation of corruption, since the political revolution could succeed only if a successful social revolution took place.

Sudan

With this in mind, the government was not averse to solving the Sudanese problem. General Neguib (himself half Sudanese) shared British views and declared himself in favour of self-determination. This ended the possibility of a unitary state along the Nile, and the British came to an agreement with the Egyptians in 1952; a period of self-government preceded the introduction of self-determination. A Sudanese parliament was empowered to decide the future form of government. The administration was 'sudanised' and both British and Egyptian military forces withdrew in 1955. The Sudan opted for independence, which was achieved in the course of the following year.

Evacuation

British troops were still present in the canal zone, however. In the midst of Egypt's many internal problems, negotiations for a British withdrawal began in April 1953 in an atmosphere that favoured the Egyptians. There was constant pressure on Britain from the United States to come to a satisfactory solution of the problem, and the advent of the hydrogen bomb made the concentration of a large military base in a restricted area unattractive. The maintenance of the base was expensive too, and the terrorist activities of Egyptian nationalists added to the costs because the British had to keep a larger force than was normally necessary. However, it was only in 1954 that the British agreed to withdraw all their personnel, to leave the maintenance work on the canal in the hands of Anglo-French civilian companies and to hand the military command to Egypt. Nasser concluded the final agreement with the British in October 1954. They would evacuate the area by June 1956, subject to one proviso: they would return in the

event of an attack on Egypt, Turkey or any Arab state – a condition that arose directly from British fears of Soviet expansion in the Middle East.

THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN THE MAGHRIB

- Nationalists** The Second World War was a setback as well as a stimulant for the nationalist movement in French North Africa. The movement remained alive beneath the surface, and consequently the French had to face strong opposition after the war. As in Egypt, international circumstances favoured the Maghribian nationalists, especially when the Cold War intensified. This gave the military bases in the region special significance for the United States and ensured American support for the nationalists in the belief that this would disconcert the Soviet Union, who posed as the logical anti-colonial ally.
- Setif rising** France had the first taste of the severity of nationalist demands on the day the cease fire was signed in Europe. The Setif rising was the most serious disturbance in Algeria since 1871 and stemmed from the growing social and economic inequality between the two population groups and from budding Arab nationalism.
- Demands for Tunisian independence** The first demand for independence came from Tunisia, the most westernised and politically aware region in the Maghrib. During the war Bourguiba had cooperated to some extent with the French, but because of their hostility towards him he moved to Cairo. Here he hoped to enlist not only international support but also Arab support for Tunisian independence. This was not forthcoming and the Arab League also proved disappointing. When the French refused the demands of moderate Tunisian politicians in 1946, they closed ranks with the Neo Destour in a demand for independence. After tours of Britain and United States, Bourguiba returned to Tunisia where he was received with great acclaim. He improved party organisation and the French realised that an agreement with the Tunisian nationalists was necessary. In 1950 they made a seven-point plan and the Socialist government agreed to introduce autonomy in progressive phases.
- Colon opposition** Tunisia's 240 000 colons, supported by Algeria's white population, were vehemently opposed to this development, and late in 1951 the French government retracted and announced that no further reforms would be introduced. Bourguiba was arrested before he could travel to New York, where he wanted to put Tunisia's case before the Security Council of the United Nations. In 1951 the Afro-Asian bloc declared its willingness to support his demand while the Tunisian Trade Union called a general strike resulting in more arrests and virtual insurrection. Terrorist groups were active in the south too, and this affected the two neighbouring French colonies. The French now had a clear choice between recognition of Tunisian independence and government by strong-arm means.
- Morocco: Sultan Mohammed** Meanwhile the French position in Morocco was also deteriorating. Attempts to introduce liberal reforms in 1946 only agitated the protectorate's 400 000 whites and failed to win the confidence of Sultan Mohammed. In 1947 he affiliated himself with the Arab world and strengthened his ties with the Istiqlal, while the colon resident-general, Alphonso Juin, worked towards a permanent French-Moroccan connection. The

French assigned a definite role to the Moroccans and saw themselves as the indispensable modernisers of the country. The sultan was a serious stumbling block, because his Pan-Arabic views and predilection for nationalism and internal sovereignty ruled out the possibility of a joint French–Moroccan sovereignty. The sultan could only pressurise the French through refusal to sign certain decrees, and consequently they decided to get rid of him. To do so, Juin utilised the traditional differences between Berber and Arab. When disturbances between Mohammed and the rural population occurred in 1953, the French seized the opportunity and banned him. This ended in unrest, which enhanced Mohammed's position, while his docile successor and the French were unable to introduce the policy of dual sovereignty. The new sultan was confined to the palace and failed to rally any support. Attempts were made upon his life; social and economic reform came to a standstill and terrorism increased. A Moroccan Liberation Army was established and divisions appeared among French political leaders about policy in the protectorate.

Tunisian independence In 1954 France contemplated concessions in both Tunisia and Morocco, a decision that was influenced by its deteriorating position in Indochina. While the Indochinese peace conference took place in Paris, Bourguiba was released from prison and the French prime minister, Pierre Mendes-France, visited Tunisia and recognised Tunisia's right to autonomy. When some Tunisians expressed themselves in favour of self-government instead of independence, Mendes-France granted it on 31 July 1954. A delighted Bourguiba stated that a decisive stage had been reached on the road to restoration of complete sovereignty, with independence as the final goal. It then became possible through 'close co-operation between the two peoples, conscious of their solidarity – co-operation from which all ideas of domination will be banished'.⁶

Morocco independent monarchy During 1955 conditions in Morocco remained unsettled and serious anti-French uprisings occurred. When problems elsewhere in the French empire assumed alarming proportions, the French realised that matters were made worse by the sultan's absence and in September they asked him to return. He agreed, on condition that he could lead Morocco to independence before the question of interdependence with France could be considered. The Moroccan Liberation Army launched attacks on the French in the Rif Mountains to enforce Mohammed's claim. The French conceded and Morocco became an independent monarchy on 2 March 1956 under Mohammed, henceforth known as Mohammed V. In May the question of interdependence was settled and the way was prepared for cooperation on various levels as equals. Spain soon followed this example, yielding control of Spanish Morocco on 7 April 1956 and returning the international town of Tangier to Morocco a few months later.

Tunisian republic These developments convinced Tunisia that the self-government it enjoyed was no longer satisfactory and negotiations for independence were resumed when France acknowledged that Tunisia was ready for the same status as Morocco. Bourguiba's attitude ruled out any cooperation with the bey and Tunisia became a republic. Clashes with France continued as a result of Tunisia's sympathy with the Algerian struggle for independence. This was aggravated by the continued presence of French troops in the country and the frequent incidents that occurred on the Tunisian/Algerian border.

Another source of rivalry lay in the desire for unity expressed by North African Arabs. This had implications for the great naval base at Bizerta, and when the French and the Algerians began to negotiate in 1962, Bourguiba demanded the withdrawal of all French troops from the country – a step that was taken after some serious clashes in June. Strategic air bases in Morocco, which the United States had maintained since the Second World War, were evacuated when Morocco applied pressure. Like Tunisia, Morocco supported Algeria in its struggle for independence.

Algeria French hopes that the end of the war in Indochina and the improvement of conditions in Tunisia in 1954 would give her some respite were dashed when armed Algerian guerrillas launched attacks on several parts of the colony on 1 November 1954. This was stimulated not only by the success achieved by Tunisia and Morocco in their struggle for independence, but also by Algerian nationalism, which had blossomed after the Setif rising of 1945. Ferhat Abbas, who had not believed in an Algerian nation prior to this, declared that a visible change had set in⁷ and moderate Algerian leaders expressed their doubts about French motives in their country.

Ben Bella and the FLN Despite De Gaulle's suggested reforms (which contained many concessions) Messali Hadj reappeared to establish the extremist Movement for the Triumph of Liberal Democracy (MTLD) while the Organisation Spéciale (the military wing of the MTLD) was founded by Ben Bella in Cairo in 1947. But Algerian resistance suffered because of personal rivalry between the leaders and lack of support in the United Nations before 1952. The French acted against some of the leaders and Ben Bella was imprisoned. He managed to escape to Cairo, where he organised the Front for the Liberation of Algeria (FLN) and demanded the restoration of sovereignty. If France did not comply, the FLN threatened to start a guerrilla war and to use diplomatic pressure in the United Nations to force France's hand. The rebellion was initially of a limited nature,⁸ which misled the French, but they soon realised that they were dealing with well-organised resistance. The rebellion became a major political issue since politicians in France were divided on it. Algeria was seen as part of France and withdrawal from the two neighbouring colonies was regarded as a preliminary step to allow France more room to manoeuvre when dealing with Algeria. An added factor was the contact of the colons with families in France, as this could influence the position of the many weak governments within the country at that time. No government wanted to add to its unpopularity by withdrawing from the Algerian war – irrespective of the unpopularity of the war itself.

In-creased pressure While the mother country debated the issue, the FLN steadily increased its pressure, and France began to lose the support of the masses. Political instability in France did not help matters, and the army's role and influence in Algeria increased. The decision-makers in Algeria were army officers who believed that negotiations with the FLN could start only after it was militarily defeated – a situation which lasted until De Gaulle returned to power in 1958.

PAN-AFRICANISM AND DECOLONISATION IN TROPICAL AFRICA

Italian
inva-
sion of
Ethiopia

At the beginning of the Second World War, nationalism in sub-Saharan Africa was much less advanced than in the Arab north. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia, however, strongly stimulated nationalist feelings, because African and Afro-American intellectuals saw Italy's move as an attack on all blacks and their civilisations throughout the world. Many years after the event, Kwame Nkrumah, who arrived in London at the time of the invasion, said that he had felt as if the whole of the British capital had declared war on him personally when he learned about the invasion from a newspaper poster. West Indians such as George Padmore and Africans such as Jomo Kenyatta and Dr J. B. Danquah from the Gold Coast formed the International African Friends of Ethiopia to protest against Italy's conduct and organised a demonstration at Waterloo Station when Haile Selassie arrived there in 1936. This was the limit of their protesting ability,⁹ but it underlines the politicising effect of the Ethiopian war and how it started a sincere commitment to Pan-Africanism and the eventual liberation of Africa among blacks in London. With the foundation of George Padmore's African Service Bureau in 1937, the International African Friends of Ethiopia joined the organisation which at first arranged debates and lectures and propagated its Marxist but non-Communist ideas in its journal, *International African Opinion*.

Pan-
Afri-
can
Federation

During the war the number of Africans and West Indians in London increased and since they were members of the Commonwealth and involved in war production, they achieved political significance. Although they called for a clear statement on the future of the colonies from the British government, they remained virtually inactive until 1943, when they began to think in terms of a Pan-African organisation which would function in terms of the Atlantic Charter. In 1944 a loose umbrella association, the Pan-African Federation, was formed, apparently under the initiative of George Padmore, to prepare for the fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester the following year.

Man-
chester
Con-
gress;
Young
African
militants

The Manchester Congress was one of a chain of reactions that was sparked by the Ethiopian crisis of 1936. It differed from previous congresses in many respects. Although W. E. B. du Bois, one of the fathers of Pan-Africanism, was elected to the chair after the proceedings began, this was merely a gesture to link the congress with the previous ones, for which he had been largely responsible. For the first time, Africa was well represented as 26 of the 90 delegates came from Africa and the remainder from the West Indies. There were no American Negroes. Ministers and academics no longer dominated proceedings but were forced into the background by a generation of young militants, including Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Hastings Banda and T. R. Makonnen (a British Guinean who had adopted an Ethiopian name). Twenty of Africa's delegates came from West Africa, but there were no representatives from Liberia or Ethiopia despite the Charlton Town Hall being decorated with the flags of these two countries. Many West African delegates were members of newly established trade unions and this bridged the gap between the elite and the masses which had characterised earlier congresses. This new link also fused the intellectualism of Du Bois and the West African Students Union with Garvey's mass movement.

Mass movement The Manchester Congress was a mass movement exuding a spirit of anti-imperialism under circumstances far more favourable than previous congresses. The Second World War had ended only a few months earlier and the Pan-Africanists expected much of the ruling British Labour Party. The new Labour leaders could support and encourage each other to initiate an anti-colonial programme as they argued on the grievances of the coloured people. Because Padmore and Nkrumah acted as joint secretaries throughout the congress, it is obvious that the influence of Padmore's International African Service Bureau was of decisive importance.¹⁰ Resolutions were passed demanding freedom and the creation of a united states of Africa. A call was made for an end to political and economic oppression and all discriminatory legislation so that Africans could enjoy basic human rights. They also laid emphasis on the African Personality and the value of Africa's indigenous institutions and affirmed the belief that the traditional communalism of African societies was essentially socialist, but in the light of the continent's strong religious traditions it was considered to be anti-Marxist. Socialism was seen as the only way of solving the problems of poverty and hunger. The Western governments were challenged to remain loyal to the Atlantic Charter.¹¹ The congress also accepted the use of strikes and boycotts to achieve its demands and declared that it believed in peace but, in the last resort, might have to make use of force if the Western world insisted on ruling mankind – because they were determined to be free. The declaration ended by calling on all colonial peoples to unite.¹²

West African National Secretariat After the congress, the Pan-African Federation attempted to keep the momentum of Manchester alive, but not much was achieved. Du Bois was called upon to plead their case at the United Nations while Nkrumah and I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson, encouraged by Padmore, established the West African National Secretariat in 1946. This aimed at securing independence for all the West African colonies as a prelude to the formation of the united states of Africa which had been envisaged at Manchester. In its journal, the *New African*, the idea of unity – including the French and Portuguese colonies in West Africa – was promoted, but West Africa is a wide geographical concept and efforts to lure French West Africa into a united West African socialist republic failed. The secretariat also served as a link between nationalist leaders in British West Africa and the Labour government in London.

Kwame Nkrumah In 1947 Nkrumah was presented with the opportunity of embarking on a political career and returning to Africa: he was invited to become the general secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention, a political organisation in the Gold Coast bent on exploring ways to independence.¹³ In this way one of Pan-Africanism's greatest supporters returned to Africa, presented with the opportunity of applying the movement's ideals on the continent. But he and other Pan-Africanists, who later followed him to Africa, devoted all their efforts to the achievement of independence. For a time the quest for a united continent was relegated to the background as the struggle for independence proceeded.

THE CHALLENGE FROM THE GOLD COAST

United
Gold
Coast
Con-
vention

The men who invited Nkrumah to return to the land of his birth came from an older generation of businessmen, rich farmers, chiefs and lawyers who prospered under the colonial regime. They were the men to whom the Labour government was willing to grant power – part-time politicians looking towards independence within ten years – a period during which they would keep pressure on the British through widespread use of the masses. It was for this purpose that they called upon Nkrumah, who began reorganising the United Gold Coast Convention as soon as he arrived home. He made contact with dissatisfied ex-servicemen who complained about social conditions, and before long the United Gold Coast Convention became involved in violent demonstrations in Accra in 1948, when a boycott was imposed against European and Lebanese stores in protest against the rise in prices of imported goods. Though the United Gold Coast Convention had little to do with the boycott or the ensuing excesses, it seized the opportunity this presented and demanded government be handed over to an interim authority and a constituent assembly be formed. Instead, the Labour government appointed the Coussey Commission, an all-African body, to formulate further constitutional recommendations. As far as the constitution was concerned, the Gold Coast was at this stage the most extensively developed British colony in West Africa. In terms of the Burns constitution of 1946, the protectorate and the colony were represented in the legislative council, where the Africans held a majority; five were elected by the towns on a limited franchise. The Coussey Commission found that this constitution was dated and suggested the introduction of a full parliamentary system. By the time this report appeared in 1949 and was accepted by the British, the scenario in the Gold Coast had changed dramatically.

In the aftermath of the Accra riots, five leaders of the United Gold Coast Convention, including Nkrumah, were arrested. The others blamed Nkrumah for this and the first cracks appeared in their ranks. Nkrumah was temporarily demoted but resumed his work after his release from gaol and founded a nationalist newspaper, the *Accra Evening News*, for the party in September 1948. After the leaders joined the Coussey Commission, tension was renewed, aggravated by the social differences between Nkrumah (who came from a poor and isolated region in the country) and the representatives of the professional class in the United Gold Coast Convention. The situation deteriorated when an unsigned membership card of the British Communist Party was found in Nkrumah's possession: only his popularity throughout the country prevented his expulsion from the United Gold Coast Convention.

Con-
vention
Peo-
ple's
Party

The Coussey Commission was still in session when Nkrumah broke away from the party. Using his popularity among young people, whom he coordinated in the Committee of Youth Organisations, he gathered together the radical anti-colonialists and formed the Convention People's Party in June 1949. The new party was sharply critical of the Coussey Commission, calling it 'an imperialist fraud' and demanding 'self-government now', which they defined as full dominion status within the Commonwealth. Nkrumah reiterated his demands in a campaign of 'positive action', which involved strikes, boycotts and non-cooperation with the British. Based on the Gandhian

pattern, it was designed to cultivate consciousness of struggle throughout the colony. This inevitably led to disturbances, and Nkrumah and other Convention People's Party leaders were imprisoned, each receiving sentences of one year. Meanwhile the British government announced the terms of the new constitution and organised an election for February 1951, which the Convention People's Party won despite its decision to boycott the Coussey constitution. Nkrumah was elected while in prison and the governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, released him so that he could form a government. Nkrumah abandoned his claim for immediate self-government and worked under the Coussey constitution. Meanwhile the British agreed to a brief transitional period.

The Convention People's Party was radical and had a popular following but these moves ended the period of violence and confrontation and Nkrumah and Arden-Clarke continued to cooperate towards the Gold Coast's complete independence. A demand for this was embodied in a unanimous motion taken in the legislative assembly in July 1953, but as independence drew closer, differences and opposition to the Convention People's Party emerged. The British tested these divisions by holding general elections in 1954 and 1956.

- Togo** Although Nkrumah won the 1956 election by a clear margin, the future of the United Nations trust territory of Togo remained a problem. The Ewe tribe agitated to join their brethren in French Togoland but a United Nations plebiscite, held in May 1956, established that a majority of the inhabitants of British Togoland preferred to unite with an independent Gold Coast. This was the position when the Egyptian leader, Nasser, nationalised the Suez Canal Company; this set in motion a train of events which was to influence the decolonisation process dramatically, not only in the British colonies, but also in French Africa.

FRANCE AND BLACK AFRICA

- Constitution of 1946** Nationalism in French black Africa was strongly affected by the esteem blacks felt towards French culture and by their close association with politics in Paris – loyalty and involvement which had arisen from the traditional French policy of assimilation and centralisation. When the constitution of 1946 was compiled, no part of French black Africa asked for independence or autonomy¹⁴ and with the exception of a rebellion in Madagascar in 1947 (where French setbacks in Indochina had a direct influence) and some rebelliousness in the Ivory Coast in the same year, the road to independence in the two federal blocs was peaceful.

- Bamako Congress** Many leaders regarded the 1946 constitution as inadequate because it did not give the same rights to everyone and the colonial territories still had minority representation in the French National Assembly. The other two bodies, the High Council of the French Union and the Assembly of the French Union, had only advisory powers – Léopold Senghor regarded it as 'a marriage of convenience'. In the wake of the new constitution, a few small political parties appeared in the colonies, but disagreement among the black leaders and their close association with political parties in the mother country prevented any strong action. With the exception of the French Communist Party none

of the metropolitan parties championed the idea of autonomy for the colonies. This caused dissatisfaction, and Félix Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, with an eye on the promotion of greater West African unity and more purposeful anti-colonial action, organised a congress of all the political leaders in Bamako in 1946.

RDA At Bamako a regional approach was adopted to politics in France's African federations and the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA) was formed under the leadership of Houphouët-Boigny. The party addressed itself to all levels of society and aimed at uniting blacks in the struggle against colonialism. It hoped to 'free Africa from the colonial yoke by the affirmation of her personality and by the association – freely agreed to – of a union of nations'. Initially the RDA enjoyed the support of the French Communist Party, which in turn cost the RDA the support of Senghor and Senegal. By 1950 tension between the RDA and the French administration resulted in sporadic violence. This, and the decline of the French Communist Party, persuaded Houphouët-Boigny to sever his links with the communists. He purged his party of more radical elements and made it a purely African party which would cooperate with the mother country in obtaining self-government before giving any attention to possible federation with France. This cost the RDA some of its regional influence and in the 1951 French elections it had only three representatives in the National Assembly, of whom one was Houphouët-Boigny.

Loi Cadre After 1951 the fortunes of the party gradually improved, and in the 1956 election the RDA won 9 out of the 21 African seats in the French National Assembly. In these years there were strong rumours that the British were to grant the Gold Coast independence and this forced the French government to make some kind of concession to the nationalists in French West Africa. Houphouët-Boigny, by then the most influential politician in French Africa, was included in the Socialist government that was formed in France in 1956. In the midst of growing criticism about the lack of opportunity for blacks to participate in the regional governments of the two federations, Houphouët-Boigny and the Minister for Overseas Territories, Gaston Defferre, formulated the Loi Cadre, a measure that was later regarded by some as a palliative. Nevertheless it laid the foundation for reform that changed the whole face of the French empire in black Africa.

The Loi Cadre affected the decentralisation or balkanisation of French black Africa because each separate administration could introduce the reforms it considered necessary by means of decrees. Universal suffrage was introduced and each territory received its own executive council with a majority of elected members. This was an obvious attempt to conform with the British method, because it allowed constitutional growth while preventing the kind of insurgence that had occurred in French North Africa – where the Algerian war continued, causing great disruption. While the French were trying to satisfy black African nationalists in this way, Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal – an event which changed the course of decolonisation in Africa dramatically, for the upheaval it caused had widespread repercussions.

THE SUEZ CRISIS

- Egypt non-aligned** As a result of the Cold War, the West wanted to keep the Russians out of the Middle East while Egypt adopted a non-aligned stance. Egypt and Israel feared each other and the flow of French weapons to Israel caused Nasser to turn to the Soviets because he could not obtain the arms he wanted from London or Washington. His attendance of the Bandung Conference, where the principle of non-alignment assumed a specific connotation (which the West regarded with the utmost suspicion), as well as his recognition of Communist China in 1956, brought further estrangement.
- The Aswan Dam** The interests of American cotton farmers also affected events at this time: 1956 was presidential election year in the United States, and the country's cotton farmers requested the government to cancel the aid it had promised Egypt in 1955 to improve the Aswan Dam. This aid formed part of a hydroelectricity project the United States had undertaken together with Britain and the World Bank. The dam's greater capacity would also increase the Egyptian cotton crop threefold. The American cotton farmers found this untenable: they argued that the American taxpayers were being used to finance direct Egyptian competition.
- Nationalisation of the Suez Canal** No presidential candidate was willing to undertake a risk such as this and the aid was cancelled. Britain and the World Bank soon followed suit and Nasser, dissatisfied with the income Egypt derived from the Suez Canal, nationalised it on the fourth anniversary of the Egyptian revolution. He wanted to use this income to finance the Aswan Dam project, but undertook to compensate the shareholders of the Suez Canal Company for their losses. The United States, France and Britain protested. To the British, the Suez Canal was still a lifeline to the East and Anthony Eden, the British prime minister, who believed that Nasser was behind many of the anti-British activities in the Middle East, saw an opportunity to remove him from power. He contacted the French, who in turn believed that Nasser supported the Algerian rebels. They cooperated with the British to formulate a secret plan to remove Nasser. The scheme implied the use of force: Nasser would reject an ultimatum that would be phrased in such a way that he could not possibly accept it. The plan could not be implemented immediately, however, because neither Britain nor France was ready to act militarily. While they prepared for this, the United States made unsuccessful attempts to effect a diplomatic settlement, but Nasser refused to accept Dulles's plan to place the canal in the hands of an international agency. The Americans decided to use the route around the Cape instead, and promised aid to this effect to those who lacked the means to do so. In September 1956, the canal was still functioning well and the whole issue was referred to the United Nations. Meanwhile the French drew the Israelis into the crisis without the knowledge of the British.
- Anglo-French ultimatum** To ensure a continued flow of French arms, the Israelis had to schedule the attack on Egypt as close to the American presidential election as possible. The Jewish vote in the United States would prevent the Americans from protecting Nasser. Meanwhile the United Nations laid the foundation for a settlement which Eden refused to accept – he preferred to keep to the prearranged plot. On 29 October 1956 the Israelis attacked, and

an Anglo-French ultimatum to the warring parties that they cease hostilities followed the next day. Nasser refused to comply, whereupon the British and the French attacked Cairo and Port Said from the air, destroying Egypt's air force and occupying the northern part of the canal zone. This drew the super powers into the arena and the Soviets found an excellent smokescreen for their brutal suppression of the Hungarian revolt in Budapest. The Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, offered the Egyptians military aid,¹⁵ and threatened to attack Britain and France with rockets. The United States failed to come to the aid of its allies, partly because their action smacked of old-fashioned imperialism and partly because it would have driven its Arab oil suppliers into Soviet hands. Consequently it supported the United Nations resolution which called for a ceasefire and demanded the withdrawal of all troops. Under the circumstances there was little that Britain and France could do, and for them the crisis ended ingloriously. Instead of being removed, Nasser emerged as a British-made martyr with a greatly improved standing in the Arab and African world.

Implications The crisis was a tremendous blow to Western prestige and the British realised that they had lost their former power. Thereafter Britain had to put even more effort into accommodating Afro-Asian nationalism, and soon the French were also made aware of the far-reaching implications of the incident as far as its colonies were concerned. The Suez crisis certainly gave the decolonisation of Africa more momentum. This became evident in the Gold Coast shortly afterwards and was also seen in the new attitude the French adopted towards black Africa and Algeria in 1958.

BRITAIN AND THE 'WIND OF CHANGE'

Ghanaian independence The negative image which the Suez crisis gave Britain made it imperative for it to show another face to a critical world. An opportunity to do so presented itself in the Gold Coast. The date for the colony's independence had been fixed before the Suez crisis had reached its climax – and on 6 March 1957 the former West African colony, now named Ghana, became independent. This name had been popular among Gold Coast nationalists ever since the 1930s, although it refers to a medieval Sudanic trading kingdom with which present-day Ghana has no direct links. On the night of Ghana's independence, Nkrumah dedicated himself and the newly independent country of which he was now the leader, to the struggle for African independence in Africa. Explaining this, he said that 'our independence is meaningless unless it is linked with the total liberation of the African continent'. Nkrumah soon made contact with the heads of those states which had already become independent, as well as the leaders of liberation movements in regions that were still under colonial rule.

Nigeria Nigeria was the first British colony in West Africa to follow the example of the Gold Coast. In 1957 the British government promised Nigeria, their largest colony in the region, independence if its leaders saw their way clear to cooperating in a formally constituted federal structure. This system was compiled with careful attention to the complicated ethnic and cultural composition of the territory – which the Yoruba leader, Obafemi Awolowo, described as a 'geographical expression' and whose existence as a single nation he attacked vigorously in 1947.¹⁶ In Nigeria there was a complete absence

of cultural and economic ties between the Muslim north, under its aristocratic Fulbe leaders, and the westernised, Christian and commercially oriented south, which was subdivided between the Ibos in the east and the Yorubas in the west, with a variety of small tribes living between them.

- Federation** Influences from the Gold Coast reached the usually loyal and contented Nigeria by 1947, and the changes the British introduced in the following year gave power to regional councils. These changes were directed at the Western-educated elite in the south and the British feared that the Muslim north would not participate in British efforts to introduce a federal form of government for the whole territory. Democratic political awareness was much higher in the south and when the constitution was revised in 1951, it introduced the principle that the north would henceforth be subject to supervision by the more advanced south. Nigeria was organised into a loose federation, but this dispensation was not acceptable to all and in 1954 further amendments were made to the constitution in an effort to balance the regional autonomy with greater involvement of regional politicians at central government level. To ensure the success of this arrangement, self-government and the prospect of independence was promised.
- Willink Commission** The British offer of federal power in 1957 was sufficient to induce leaders from the northeastern regions, inspired by mutual fear of the West, to form a coalition. After regional elections had clarified the situation, Sir Abubakar Tafewa Balewa, a northerner, emerged as the strongest leader. However, fears about minority rights persisted and in 1958 the Willink Commission recognised that sufficient grounds existed to justify these fears. The Willink Commission rejected any division of Nigeria into smaller regions and even made suggestions on reducing the number of these regions, but the suggestions were ignored. As soon as the limitations on the north's power were lifted, attention turned to independence – this immense region could then dominate the colony politically in coalition with the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) of Azikiwe. Independence was granted in October 1960.
- East Africa** The compulsive force of nationalism spread to East Africa more rapidly than the British realised. Constitutional development similar to that in West Africa was more complicated, however, because the whites, especially those in Kenya, demanded alternative measures to those applied in West Africa. The British opted for multiracial constitutions, not only in Kenya but also in Tanganyika, which became a trusteeship territory under the supervision of the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. Economically and educationally this colony lagged far behind the other two East African territories, but in accordance with the trusteeship agreement, the British government undertook to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants and to guide them towards self-government and independence in accordance with their wishes. The result of this was that Tanganyika became independent before the other British East African territories.
- Nyerere and Tanu** Apart from being in the international limelight, other circumstances in Tanganyika favoured the colony's advance to independence. There were no sharp ethnic differences between the inhabitants, and no large tribes could dominate the smaller ones. Swahili

was already recognised as a general language and the number of whites was small. Furthermore, Tanganyika's most prominent nationalist leader, Julius Nyerere, had the support of the whites as well as that of the Asians living in the territory. After Nyerere's return to his native country he reorganised the Tanganyika African Association before reconstituting it into the Tanganyika African National Union (Tanu), based upon Nkrumah's example. When a United Nations commission visited Tanganyika in 1954, Nyerere gained its recognition for his mass movement and in 1955 this commission recommended that Tanganyika become independent in twenty years time. This notion met with the opposition of Tanganyikans, the British government and the Trusteeship Council – they all felt that this was far too slow.

Independence Nyerere criticised the British preference for a multiracial constitution, pointing out that Tanganyika was primarily an African territory and had to develop as such. However, he gave the British the assurance that an African government would certainly not be prejudiced against any other element of the population. This won him the support of the whites and Asians as well as that of London, and Tanu won the 1958 election by a large margin on the basis of a non-racial democracy. This was the turning point, and two years later the principle of parity was discarded and a new constitution was accepted which included responsible ministers. At that point Tanu won all but one of the seats and Nyerere became chief minister in May 1961, leading the trust territory to independence in December.

Uganda Although there were no white settlers in Uganda, this colony's path to independence was complicated by the existence of strong domestic disunity between the kingdom of Buganda and the other traditional kingdoms of Ankole, Bunyoro, Toro and Busoga in the south and in the east. Personified by its king, Bugandan nationalism was exclusive and refused to sacrifice any privileges to the other kingdoms. In contrast to British preference for separate independence, the British governor, Sir Andrew Cohen, strove towards a unitary state, and in 1953 the Bugandan king was banned. This resulted in a great deal of turbulence which was not solved until the return of the Bugandan king, Mutesa II. At that point blacks were given a majority in the legislative council. From 1959 the Bugandans began to cooperate with the radical Ugandan Peoples' Congress, and this led to a victory at the polls in 1962. A strong federal constitution was adopted and Uganda became independent in October 1962.

Kenya; Mau Mau rebellion With the rejection of the multiracial system in Tanganyika, its application in Kenya was also doomed, and after 1959 the British stopped experimenting with multiracial constitutions that were expected to take twenty years to evolve. The new attitude was confirmed by the Mau Mau rebellion which broke out in 1951 and which took the British four years to bring under control. This rebellion was directly related to the land question, with land-hungry Kikuyu, who were living under deteriorating social and economic circumstances, casting envious eyes on the white highlands where Kikuyu had once roamed. The Mau Mau was also supported by radical elements in the ranks of the Kenya African Union who disagreed with the gradual development towards self-rule which the moderate members preferred. Although Kenyatta was one of the radicals, his share in the formation and organisation of the Mau Mau – primarily a

Kikuyu terrorist organisation – is unknown. By using Western organisational methods and Kikuyu oath-swearing ceremonies, including the drinking of blood and the swearing of a bond of allegiance to death, these members acted not only against whites but, even more so, against those blacks who sympathised with the whites. When white Kenyans called upon the government to act against the Mau Mau, Kenyatta and other leaders were arrested while British troops and loyal Kikuyu units were employed to contain Mau Mau activities. Detention camps were set up and opportunities were created for Mau Mau members to renounce their oaths. A state of emergency remained in force until 1960 when only sporadic incidents still occurred.

**Kanu
and
Kadu**

Despite the lack of international support the Mau Mau rebellion managed to stop European immigration to Kenya, exposed the inability of Kenya's whites to defend themselves and slowed down constitutional development. When the British relinquished the idea of multiracial constitutions in 1959, constitutional development regained some momentum. Blacks obtained the majority in the legislative council in 1961, and two new political organisations were formed. The Kenya African National Union (Kanu) represented the Kikuyu and Lua tribes as well as urbanised blacks. It elected Kenyatta as president. He had been released from prison in 1959, but was restricted to the north of the colony. The other political body, the Kenya National Democratic Union (Kadu), represented the smaller tribes, and mutual mistrust between these parties became a new delaying factor in Kenya's constitutional development. Kadu preferred a federal Kenya while Kanu wanted a unified state. These two groups had only their desire for independence in common. The British government, who sided with black nationalism against Kenyan whites, Asiatics and moderate blacks who continued to work for a multiracial dispensation, suggested a compromise in 1962. Six strong regional governments with wide powers were introduced and when Kanu won an election in terms of this constitution, Kadu had to accept the humiliation. Kenya became independent on 12 December 1963.

**Feder-
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In British Central Africa, efforts to achieve closer cooperation became much stronger after the Second World War, especially among the white population. The enormous growth of the copper industry in Northern Rhodesia indicated the economic advantages of this move, while political consolidation would enable the whites to deal with the rising nationalist aspirations of the blacks. Added to this, the metropolitan government recognised the opportunity of applying its policy of multiracial partnership and thwarting the possible expansion of South African influence north of the Limpopo. The Labour government, however, favoured a federation including Nyasaland instead of a simple amalgamation between Northern and Southern Rhodesia. Inclusion of Nyasaland would free Britain from the financial burden of its administration. Blacks in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were vehemently opposed to any form of closer union, while those in Southern Rhodesia were deeply suspicious of the move. In 1950 circumstances began to favour federation when James Griffiths took over control of the Colonial Office from Arthur Creech-Jones and the Korean War broke out. After the Conservative Party returned to power in Britain in the following year, the Federation of

Rhodesia and Nyasaland was established. To placate African opposition, it was decided to review the federation after a period of seven to nine years.

Black nationalism The federation was an initial success, especially in the economic sphere. Black income rose sharply while industrial development and white immigration, especially to Southern Rhodesia, increased significantly. Politicians, however, realised that some positive steps towards black political rights were necessary before the federal revision in 1960 if the goal of a modern state in Central Africa was to be realised. This was emphasised by events in the Gold Coast. Whereas their proposals for constitutional development were aimed at giving the metropolitan government some proof of the development which had taken place, blacks in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland interpreted them as efforts to impose Southern Rhodesian ideas on other parts of the federation. This was unacceptable to the black nationalists and they realised that time was not on their side. Convinced that whites in Southern Rhodesia were shaping their future, nationalists in Nyasaland recalled Hastings Banda to take political control. Soon after his return, politics in Nyasaland changed in favour of the blacks in the federation. Widespread disturbances occurred and strict official measures were enforced to curtail them, including the arrest of Hastings Banda and Kenneth Kaunda in Northern Rhodesia.

Monckton Commission The anti-riot measures were an effort to play down the nationalist position, but the British government, by then under increasing pressure after the Suez debacle and its position in East Africa, came to a different conclusion and took steps which led eventually to the demise of the federation. The home government undertook its own investigation into the Nyasaland riots and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan went on his famous 'wind of change' tour of the continent. Macmillan wanted to embark on a different course with the federation before the federal review took place, and after his visit he sent the Monckton Commission there to establish the amount of support that the federation had among the blacks. Banda was released from prison to testify before this commission, and Nyasaland received a new constitution giving the blacks a majority of the seats even before the Monckton Commission published its findings.

Secession This affected the position of the two Rhodesias since it opened the way for secession. Southern Rhodesia and the British government agreed upon a new constitution in which London sacrificed its reserve powers, and in 1961 the Rhodesian whites accepted an electoral formula which recognised the black claim to the franchise when they possessed the necessary educational and property qualifications. In 1962 Northern Rhodesia received a constitution based on the pattern of Nyasaland. With black majorities governing both of these colonies, they opted for complete independence and left the federation.

Rhodesian Front Southern Rhodesian whites expected to be given the same treatment but the colony's most prominent black nationalist leader, Joshua Nkomo, refused to cooperate. His aim was probably to try to prove the 1961 constitution unworkable and thus gain a dispensation similar to those granted to Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. Among the whites a new political party, the Rhodesian Front, came to the fore, led by Winston Field. At the federal dissolution conference, Field claimed treatment similar to that accorded

by the metropolitan government to other ex-members of the defunct federation. This was refused and Anglo-Rhodesian relations entered a period of mutual frustration between the British government and the white Rhodesians.

UDI 1965 Great uncertainty surrounded race relations in Central, East and southern Africa during the early 1960s. White Rhodesians were well aware of developments in Kenya and the former Belgian Congo and believed that as long as the British government had any say in Rhodesia, the colony's blacks would not cooperate with the whites. In a referendum in 1964, the whites expressed themselves in favour of independence. Soon afterwards Winston Field was replaced by Ian Smith whose political stance was much closer to that of the voters. After more fruitless negotiations with Harold Wilson, Britain's Labour premier, Smith cast aside the economic risks of a unilateral declaration of independence and proclaimed Rhodesia independent on 11 November 1965. A storm of indignation was unleashed among Afro-Asians, Western liberals and communists and the African states demanded the use of force to bring Rhodesia's whites to heel.

Economic sanctions Wilson's government had only a small majority at home and he was struggling with serious financial and economic issues. Amidst great problems within the Commonwealth, Wilson instituted economic sanctions through the United Nations, expecting the Rhodesian whites to succumb within a short time. This ploy failed and more negotiations followed, but Wilson wanted a return to the status that existed before the unilateral declaration of independence and insisted on 'no independence before majority rule' (Nibmar) – something the Rhodesian Front refused to accept.

Smith-Muzorewa agreement In 1970 the Conservatives returned to power and submitted all constitutional proposals on the Rhodesian issue to an impartial test conducted by the Pearce Commission. Pearce found that the proposals were unacceptable to most blacks. At the same time, Pearce's visit to Rhodesia enabled Bishop Abel Muzorewa's African National Council to step into the vacuum left by the banishment of other black nationalist political parties. After the Pearce Commission's findings had been published in 1972, the balance of power in southern Africa changed completely, because the Portuguese empire came to an end in 1974. Exclusive negotiations between the British government and Rhodesia's whites came to an end, and in 1976 Smith succumbed to joint South African and United States pressure and accepted the principle of majority rule within two years. An internal settlement was made with Muzorewa, who became prime minister of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia in 1978. This settlement was in accordance with the Nibmar principles, but Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, the two prominent nationalist leaders, rejected this settlement and continued the armed struggle. This became much more intense after 1974, when the disappearance of the Portuguese from Mozambique made it easier for freedom fighters to enter Rhodesia from this quarter.

Independence The internal settlement did have some foreign support, including that of Zambia and Mozambique. This convinced Margaret Thatcher, who became Britain's prime minister in 1979, that the political climate favoured a solution of the Rhodesian question if she could obtain Commonwealth support for her moves. The ensuing Lusaka Summit revealed that the Commonwealth was actually against the Smith-Muzorewa agree-

ment, but Thatcher won their support when she agreed to new elections in which the Patriotic Front, the result of a realignment of nationalist leaders in which Nkomo and Mugabo came together, could participate. Commonwealth observers would be allowed to monitor the elections in order to ensure that they were free and fair. It took some time to convince the Patriotic Front to agree, but a ceasefire was eventually called in December 1979. Lord Soames returned as governor of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, and in an election characterised by sporadic violence and mutual accusations of intimidation, Robert Mugabe's Zanu (Patriotic Front) won an unexpected victory. He won because his was the only party which could bring an end to the war and he alone promised the black voters a complete review of land allocation. Rhodesia became an independent republic on 18 April 1980.

FRANCE AND THE AFRICANS AFTER SUEZ

De
Gaulle
and the
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Although the Loi Cadre of 1956 laid the foundation for the dissolution of the French empire in black Africa, it was General Charles de Gaulle's return to politics in 1958 that set the most dramatic changes into motion. He was asked to take over the reins and solve France's grave domestic problems and agreed on condition that the new constitution was formulated in such a way that he would have power to handle any crisis by himself. Since the 1940s De Gaulle's views on colonialism had evolved considerably,¹⁷ and after his leadership had been approved, the Fifth Republic and the French Community or Communauté, in which overseas territories could be included as autonomous members or independent republics, came into existence. One of the main characteristics of this arrangement was the prominence of the federal principle, and in September 1958 the African territories were allowed to decide their future in a referendum in which they were given three choices. The first was to retain the status quo, that is the continuation of integration or association which meant that they could remain overseas départements or territories. Second, they could become independent member states of the French Communauté, either singly or in groups, and the third option was complete independence which implied the end of all French assistance. On a visit to Africa, De Gaulle declared in Guinea that 'independence is available to Guinea, she can have it; she can have it on 28 September by saying "no" to the proposition that is put to her, and in saying this I guarantee that Paris will raise no obstacle to it'.¹⁸

Guinea Of all the colonies in French black Africa, only Guinea exercised the latter choice, and on 2 October 1958 the colony was declared an independent republic with Sékou Touré as its first president. The French withdrew all their personnel and services from the country. This was an obvious bid to demonstrate the significance of the connection with the mother country as an example to the other colonies. Guinea did not repair the breach with France immediately and turned to Ghana for aid while the Soviet Union was quick to enter the vacuum the French had left. In December 1958 Guinea was admitted to the United Nations. In 1959 France became convinced that Guinea could survive. France and other Western powers reconsidered their original obligations. The assistance they offered enabled Guinea to loosen its ties with the Soviet Union and other communist powers.

The Mali federation In the French Communauté, France was responsible for the defence and foreign relations of the autonomous states. This automatically disqualified them from membership of the United Nations, which in turn detracted from their prestige and status in relation to neighbouring states such as Guinea and Ghana. The Communauté began to lose popularity and Guinea and Ghana, who had united in a federation during 1958, persuaded Senegal, the French Sudan, Dahomey and Upper Volta to join and form the Mali federation. Dahomey and Upper Volta eventually backed out under pressure from France and Félix Houphouët-Boigny. Senegal and the Sudan persisted, and federated in April 1959. They requested France to grant the federation complete independence, but with the retention of technical, financial, economic and military assistance. Although this signified the end of De Gaulle's Communauté, France acceded to the request and the Mali federation became independent in June 1960, while Houphouët-Boigny countered it with a loose federation and economic bloc of his own between the Ivory Coast, Dahomey and Upper Volta. Soon after the initial excitement of independence had died down, Senegal and the Sudan discovered that they did not have much in common and the federation dissolved after a mere two months. It was not long before Houphouët-Boigny also changed his mind and requested full independence, which the French granted in August 1960. In the months that followed, all of the members of the Communauté became independent republics.

Independence expands In French Equatorial Africa, all of the colonies supported the Communauté in 1958 despite their economic backwardness compared with French West Africa. No agreement on federation was reached before 1960, when these colonies also opted to become independent republics within the French Communauté. French Somaliland and Madagascar, as well as the two trust territories, Togo and Cameroon, followed the same path and eventually became fully independent in 1960.

Algeria: provisional government Having to contend with the rebellion in Algeria from 1954 was one of the reasons for the collapse of the Fourth Republic in France.¹⁹ When De Gaulle returned to power in 1958, the French army played an increasingly meaningful role in the territory and was elevated to the position of decision-maker partly as a result of the politically unstable conditions in the mother country – where short-lived governments followed each other with monotonous regularity. To break the impasse, De Gaulle was willing to make concessions, including the abandonment of the colonial system if this would keep Algeria within the structure he envisaged. In June 1958 De Gaulle visited Algeria, and in a masterly political speech²⁰ announced economic reforms, promised full French citizenship to the Muslims and invited the FLN to discussions once they had laid down their arms. This did not have the desired effect and the election that followed failed to reflect the true position. The FLN intensified the struggle and even extended it to France itself, while a provisional government of the Algerian Republic came into existence in Tunisia. It received immediate political recognition from Communist China while money and arms came from other communist countries as well as Tunisia and Morocco. The United Nations made repeated attempts to intervene. Encouraged by this support, the provisional government was prepared to negotiate only for independence. The struggle continued, characterised by increased bloodshed, bomb attacks and cruelty. The Algerian colons also became more extremist and bandied slogans such as 'Algeria

is French'; they were bitterly disappointed when De Gaulle, perceiving that the right to self-determination lay at the heart of the struggle, turned against them in September 1959.

Inde-
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As in black Africa, De Gaulle gave the Algerians three choices: complete independence, independence as a member of the French Communauté, or integration with the mother country. De Gaulle was aware that the Muslim majority who supported the FLN would choose total independence, but he did not want to recognise the FLN and the provisional government as the only representatives of Algeria. The FLN and the provisional government, on the other hand, did not want other Algerians to have a say, nor were they amenable to the idea of organising Algeria into a federation in which the various population groups or cultures such as the French, the Arabs, the Kabuls and the Mozabites would be protected. The colons believed that De Gaulle was in favour of an integrated, autonomous community in Algeria, and in 1960–1961 they joined some French generals in an unsuccessful bid to overthrow De Gaulle's government. At the same time the people in metropolitan France were becoming unwilling to continue the struggle for Algeria indefinitely. De Gaulle was aware of this when he opened discussions with the provisional government in May 1961, whereupon the secret colon army, the OAS, intensified its activities. By September, De Gaulle had accepted the principle of an independent Algeria and after an agreement had been reached early in 1962, Algeria became independent on 1 July. Now that French interests had been reformulated, those of the colons ceased to matter and it became plain that they could not stay in Algeria. In the short time that it took the French army to depart from the country, the colons streamed back to France, taking as much of their property as they could. France's participation in the European Economic Community, which was partly responsible for diverting its interests from Algeria, eased the movement of these people from one home to another at a time when France prospered economically, and many colons became staunch Gaullists.²¹

THE BELGIAN DEBACLE

Belgian
Congo

Between 1945 and 1957 colonial rule in the Belgian Congo was remarkably stable, and until then the Belgian authorities ruled their colony in complete isolation from the rest of the continent. But they were not unaware of seething dissatisfaction among the advancing évoluë population that emerged more strongly after the Second World War. Attempts were made to accommodate these people, but these attempts were mostly half-hearted and did not enjoy the support of the whites, who frequently took up the viewpoint: 'no elites, no troubles'.²² The increasing political consciousness of the évoluës grew in significance after 1955 when Dr A. J. J. van Bilsen, of the Institute for Overseas Territories at the University of Antwerp, published his *Thirty year plan for the political emancipation of Belgian Africa*. Van Bilsen held that the formation of an elite and the development of people capable of governing the Congo and Ruanda-Urundi was a generation behind those in the British and French territories. He suggested a thirty-year programme for the liberation of these colonies, beginning with representation in legislative bodies and ending in total independence. The Belgian government labelled him

a dangerous revolutionary, but four years later it unexpectedly granted greater freedom to the area, leading to much unrest in the former Belgian colony.

Patrice Lumumba In December Patrice Lumumba attended Nkrumah's All African Peoples' Conference in Accra, where he changed from a moderate politician to a radical one and demanded independence as a right. This was a direct result of Nkrumah's influence, because he had assured Lumumba of the support of the whole of Africa in the Congo's fight for independence. After his return, Lumumba attempted to achieve this goal by adopting Nkrumah's methods. He roused the masses by delivering impassioned speeches, and creating unrest, strikes and disorders in the towns. He was soon joined and supported by Kasavubu. The whole situation was exacerbated by poor economic conditions and unemployment, and in January Congolese sacked European shops and mission schools. The trouble was brought under control in a short time, but Belgian prestige suffered badly and relations between Belgium and the Congolese changed drastically. Belgian attempts to combat the disturbances with legal penalties failed, and pressure applied on them by the United Nations increased, convincing them to reconsider their long-term reform programmes.

Batutsi massacre In many parts of the colony, law and order was on the verge of breakdown, and an extreme state of tension developed in Ruanda-Urundi. The Batutsi, who dominated the region, attempted to protect the social and economic privileges they had attained under German and Belgian rule before the introduction of universal suffrage could destroy their privileged position. Faced with this dilemma, the Belgians switched their support to the Bahutu, but this resulted in a large-scale massacre of the Batutsi – yet another disorder which the Belgians failed to control. The small European country was in a predicament – it was not only unwilling to act but was also incapable of taking effective action. Above all else it feared a repetition of what had happened in Algeria. Early in 1960, while opposition parties in Belgium urged premier Gaston Eyskens's liberal government to grant the Congo independence, it summoned Congolese political leaders to a round-table conference in Ostend. In order to present a united front to the Belgian government, Congolese leaders formed a kind of coalition known as the Abako cartel. However, they encountered no opposition from the colonial masters who were adamant that they would send no more troops to control disorders. Amidst public calls throughout the country backing the decision: 'not a single soldier to Congo',²³ the Belgians announced that the Congo would become an independent state with the main power vested in a central government. Provision was also made for provincial legislative bodies with local ministries for each of the Congo's six provinces.

Mutiny A general election was held in May 1960 resulting in a majority in the central government for Lumumba's Mouvement National Congolais whereas Abako was victorious at local level – an indecisive result. After lengthy negotiations, Lumumba managed to form a government a few days before independence. He became prime minister while Kasavubu, who had failed to form a government earlier, was made president. Independence came on 30 June but disaster set in immediately. At the independence celebrations the Belgian king spoke about the ties that linked the Congo to Belgium, but Lumumba was quick to sever these in a biting attack on the mother country.²⁴ Six days

later the Congolese army, the Force Publique, mutinied and turned upon their Belgian officers and their families. When Belgian troops intervened to protect Europeans and their property, old hatred flared up and the mutineers, joined by some Congolese, avenged themselves upon the whites, especially those in the rural areas, causing many of the whites to leave. Congolese also began to fight each other, and tribal dissensions and separatism came strongly to the fore.

Katanga break-away On 11 July Katanga, which had rich mineral deposits, broke away from the Congo because Lumumba was unable to cope with the unwarranted barbarism and the financial chaos and disrupted communications independence brought with it. The United Nations ruled that the Congo was a threat to world peace and authorised the secretary-general to send troops to protect life and property while the Belgian troops withdrew. United Nations intervention made little difference: chaos reigned and the Congo became a flashpoint in the Cold War.

Ruanda-Urundi While chaos prevailed in the Congo, tension in Ruanda-Urundi also heightened. Attempts to unite the Batutsi and Bahutu into one state failed and they became separately independent under United Nations supervision in 1962. Ruanda became a republic when the Batutsi monarchy was overthrown in a bloodbath of violence. The harassment of the Batutsi became even worse, resulting in a refugee problem in neighbouring countries.

THE DEMISE OF THE PORTUGUESE EMPIRE

In contrast to Britain, France and Belgium, who loosened their ties with their African colonies from about 1955, Portugal tightened its hold on its African possessions. In June 1951 these territories were formally declared overseas provinces bound both to the motherland and to the Lusitanian culture by Portugal's centuries-old policy of assimilation in which racial differences were non-existent.²⁵ Until the end of the 1960s Portugal was willing to challenge and resist colonial and international demands for the independence of its colonies and to pay the price for this attitude.²⁶ This policy gave rise to the view that Portugal could not decolonise because it could not afford to do so economically.

Tighter Portuguese hold From 1928, when Antonio de Salazar came to power, Portugal's economy remained isolated from the modernising influences that evolved from the depression, World War II and the reconstruction which occurred in other parts of Europe. Spain, another dictatorship, acted as a political barrier between Portugal and these influences. But while the stagnating Portuguese domestic economy was largely dependent on Europe's economy, Portugal turned to Africa and cultivated its African colonies. Portugal practised formal control here because it was too weak to consider any form of indirect rule. In the 1950s the long-expected migration of Portuguese citizens to the colonies began. The influx of whites into its African colonies and the steady build-up of its armed forces at home strengthened the mother country's position – something which the indigenous population was powerless to prevent. Rebellion failed in the early sixties and intensive security isolated the nationalist leaders from the people. This satisfied the Portuguese

political and business sectors while the country's Nato allies were not seriously concerned about its African policy. In fact, it served their purposes well by combating possible communist penetration into those parts of Africa.

**AFM
coup**

In the seventies this complacency changed as Portugal began to experience more serious opposition in the colonies. As the indigenous population became aware that independence was passing them by, the liberation movements found it easier to recruit people to support their fight for freedom. The struggle was intensified by the provision of improved armaments from the Soviet Union, East Germany and Cuba: the Warsaw Pact's bid to outdo the United States in the struggle for global domination. Portugal's sources were stretched to the limit and by 1974 its ability to withstand this pressure began to falter. In Lisbon, junior and middle ranking officers were no longer willing to be part of a war they knew they could not possibly win, and leading economists lost faith in the value of the colonies. They started looking at the European Economic Community, which opened its doors to Britain, Ireland and Denmark in 1972. Spain was also beginning to move in that direction. It was essential that Portugal follow the same course, and when the Armed Forces Movement (AFM) staged a coup in April 1974, the old Salazar-Caetano regime was shelved without a drop of blood being shed.

**The Lu-
sitanian
idea
fails**

But the AFM was divided about the future of the colonies. Some of its officers preferred an immediate settlement with the nationalists, while others felt that an arrangement should be found which would guarantee metropolitan assets in the colonies. The leader of the coup, Alphonso de Spínola, preferred a Lusitanian federation similar to the French Communauté of the late 1950s, but Portugal lacked both the credibility and the power to institute such a settlement. Conditions in Portugal's African colonies differed too radically for Spínola to implement his Lusitanian idea, and he finally decided to take these divergent conditions into account. In Portuguese Guinea the military situation favoured the nationalists and the colony's economy was very shaky. The Republic of Guinea-Bissau, which had been set up in 1973, was therefore recognised in September 1974. In Mozambique, Frelimo was firmly in control and this movement was unwilling to negotiate anything other than independence. They disclaimed any aggressive intentions against whites, who had already started leaving the colony, and Lisbon backed down on its undertakings towards the whites and negotiated Mozambique's independence with Samora Machel, the leader of Frelimo. Independence was declared in June 1975.

Angola

Angola presented a different problem. The colony was rich in minerals and had strategic significance. At the same time, the lack of unity and agreement among its three liberation movements complicated the situation. Portugal realised that it could not leave Angola as it had done in its other African colonies. To do so would have created a situation unfavourable to its Western allies, who had a definite interest in a stable Angola, free from foreign interference and influence. De Spínola thought in terms of a settlement in which the Marxist-oriented MPLA's (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola) influence would be balanced by the other two liberation movements, the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FLNA) and Unita, who had Nato contacts. Spínola came to an agreement with them that independence would be granted in

November 1975, followed by a free and fair election and the withdrawal of Portuguese troops in March 1976. This arrangement made no provision for the whites, who began to leave the country in a manner reminiscent of the Algerian exodus in 1962. This left the new state without suitable administrators who could provide the essential services for its future independence.

White exodus The white exodus was accelerated when it became obvious that the liberation movements were preparing for war – a move which made the agreement between the liberation movements and the Portuguese government a mere farce. This was borne out by the serious clashes that occurred among the liberation movements in March 1975. The only action taken by the Portuguese armed forces was to enable the whites to leave the country safely. In effect, Portugal signalled to its Western allies that it was unable to handle the situation and that they would have to participate in order to prevent Angola's independence from ending in a disaster for the Western world.

American intervention At this stage Portugal's role in Angola's independence struggle came to an end and the United States stepped in. Their secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, was determined to prevent the MPLA from taking control in Angola. His solution was American–South African cooperation. The rapid disintegration of Portugal's presence soon necessitated military intervention and this commenced in October, involving an American-financed force from Zaïre. The South Africans soon followed and, in cooperation with the FNLA and Unita, they aimed to break MPLA strongholds around Luanda. This resulted in massive Cuban retaliation, whereupon the military stakes grew higher than the nervous Americans could tolerate and the superpower reneged on its commitments. South Africa could not impose any settlement without United States backing and withdrew early in 1976. The MPLA and the Cuban interlopers became Angola's new masters whereas the FLNA and Unita remained in power in regions where they had been based before the demise of Portuguese colonial rule. Under these circumstances, Angola did not attain independence but became the theatre of regional, national and international conflict that continued into the early 1990s.

THE INDEPENDENCE OF NAMIBIA

Namibia The loss of Portuguese Angola changed the South African attitude towards South West Africa. From the inception of the United Nations, South Africa had stubbornly refused to sign a trusteeship agreement with the world body. The Union government wanted to incorporate the region into its fold as a fifth province and pointed out that of the population it had consulted, 208 850 were in favour of such a move and only 33 520, about 11 per cent (most of whom were Herero) opposed the idea.²⁷ This ran contrary to the general feeling at the United Nations, where India and the Soviet Union questioned the validity of the survey. When the National Party came to power in 1948, South Africa's attitude hardened and preparations were made to incorporate South West Africa into the Union in 1949. An impasse set in because the International Court of Justice ruled that South Africa was under no obligation to sign a trusteeship agreement and the United Nations had no specific power to change the position either. Efforts to settle the affair between South Africa, Britain, France and the United States failed to

produce the desired result. Negotiations continued until Ethiopia and Liberia, the only African members of the League of Nations, took South Africa to the International Court of Justice in 1960 for alleged breaches of its obligations under the mandatory agreement. Six years elapsed before the Court ruled in South Africa's favour whereupon the United Nations established a council for South West Africa to ensure South Africa's withdrawal. On 12 June 1968 the world body changed the territory's name to Namibia.

Swapo Meanwhile two liberation movements, the Ovambo-based South West African People's Organisation (Swapo) and the South West African National Union (Swanu), with Herero support, came into existence. Swapo, with communist aid, turned to terrorism, while the Security Council of the United Nations began to busy itself with the territory. After another World Court hearing in 1971, which this time went against South Africa, Swapo was recognised as the sole representative of the people of the country. The armed conflict accelerated as South Africa tried to organise the region in accordance with its policy of separate development. The Angolan crisis of 1974 inflamed the situation even more. South Africa's position was deteriorating because it had to deal with escalating terrorism and the growing instability in Angola. The idea of Namibia as a fifth province was dropped, and the inhabitants were informed that they were free to decide their own political future.

Turn-halle conference South Africa and the United Nations officials were moving closer to one another – particularly with regard to South West Africa's multicultural and multi-ethnic composition. This was in sharp contrast with the official United Nations and Swapo view of a monolithic country of which Swapo was the sole representative. Despite opposition, South Africa managed to stage a constitutional conference at the Turnhalle in Windhoek. Although the United Nations rejected these initiatives in advance, South Africa began to comply with demands set by the United Nations even before the Turnhalle commenced. These attempts enjoyed the support of the United States, who wanted to improve the poor image the Angola fiasco had given it in the eyes of the African states.²⁸

US policy The United States' policy towards South Africa changed when Ronald Reagan became president in 1981. He believed that all Third World problems were a result of an expansionist Soviet drive and allotted South Africa a specific place in combating this. This eased the pressure on South Africa as far as South West Africa and Angola were concerned. South Africa was always ready to re-intervene if it felt that the position in South West Africa was threatened by the Cubans or the Angolan and Swapo's armed forces. To solve this, Reagan linked a South African withdrawal from South West Africa to Cuban withdrawal from Angola. This eventuality was highly unlikely because the MPLA could not survive against Unita without this support. A stalemate was the outcome.²⁹

Withdrawal During the eighties the Soviet Union, experiencing increasing domestic problems, opted for political solutions to regional conflicts such as the South West African and Angolan questions. This did not prevent a more assertive policy after 1987 when Mikhail Gorbachev made direct contact with Swapo. His approach encouraged the movement to such an extent that it declared that the independence of South West Africa

was possible only through armed conflict – despite the fact that in the decade prior to this the South African forces had virtually wiped out Swapo's forces. Gorbachev, then at the height of his power, launched a massive military onslaught with elite Cuban troops. The military status quo in the region changed dramatically before it eventually became apparent that the Soviets had begun to reduce their military commitments.³⁰ South Africa's military dominance was wiped out and although South West Africa was not directly threatened by a Cuban invasion, South Africa was obliged to become far more accommodating at the negotiating table. In November 1988 South Africa agreed to withdraw from South West Africa while the Cubans undertook to do so from Angola.³¹ South Africa also agreed to come to terms with Swapo and the United Nations over the independence of South West Africa. Under strong United Nations supervision, Namibia became independent on 21 March 1990, almost half a century after the Western Allies had restored the independence of Ethiopia in 1941.

Notes

- 1 K. Irvine, *The rise of the coloured races*, p. 592.
- 2 R. F. Holland, *European decolonization, 1918–1981: An introductory survey*, p. 129.
- 3 J. Hatch, *A history of post-war Africa*, p. 149.
- 4 P. Mansfield, *A history of the Middle East*, p. 240.
- 5 K. Wheelock, 'Coup and consolidation', in P. J. M. Mc Ewan, *Twentieth-century Africa*, p. 171, and Irvine, *The rise of the coloured races*, pp. 560–561.
- 6 As quoted by W. Knapp, *Tunisia*, p. 135.
- 7 R. Oliver & A. Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 242.
- 8 R. M. Brace, *Morocco Algeria Tunisia*, p. 112.
- 9 I. Geiss, *The Pan-African movement: A history of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe and Africa*, p. 355.
- 10 Geiss, *The Pan-African movement*, p. 404.
- 11 Irvine, *The rise of the coloured races*, p. 546.
- 12 Geiss, *The Pan-African movement*, p. 407.
- 13 D. Birmingham, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 8.
- 14 F. Ansprenger, *The dissolution of the colonial empires*, p. 211.
- 15 M. McCauley, *Nikita Khrushchev*, p. 65.
- 16 R. Hallett, *Africa since 1875*, p. 344.
- 17 J. Jackson, *Charles de Gaulle*, pp. 129–130.
- 18 Quoted in Irvine, *The rise of the coloured races*, p. 591.
- 19 Jackson, *Charles de Gaulle*, p. 46.
- 20 H. Grimal, *Decolonization: The British, French, Dutch and Belgian empires, 1919–1963*, p. 388.

- 21 Holland, *European decolonization*, p. 174.
- 22 Grimal, *Decolonization*, p. 328.
- 23 Oliver & Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 253.
- 24 R. Anstey, *King Leopold's legacy: The Congo under Belgian rule, 1908–1960*, p. 260.
- 25 Ansprenger, *The dissolution of the colonial empires*, p. 268.
- 26 Holland, *European decolonization*, p. 293.
- 27 A. P. J. van Rensburg, *Afrika-verskeidenheid*, p. 296.
- 28 Z. Laïdi, *The superpowers and Africa: The constraints of a rivalry, 1960–1990*, p. 107.
- 29 R. E. Clute, 'The American–Soviet confrontation in Africa: Its impact on the politics of Africa', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, XXIV(3 & 4), 1989, pp. 163 and 167.
- 30 R. Oliver, *The African experience*, p. 263.
- 31 P. Vanneman, *Soviet strategy in southern Africa: Gorbachev's pragmatic approach*, pp. 37–38 and 44.

Independent Africa

**Affluence
fails to
materialise**

During the decolonisation process, nationalist leaders promised the masses who supported their campaigns an end to misery and suffering once their colonial masters were gone. In the words of Kwame Nkrumah, corrupting a biblical text, Africans first seeking the earthly kingdom would receive everything they desired following the coming of 'uhuru' or freedom. Three decades of political freedom have proved that these claims were hollow, especially with regard to black Africa. Conditions in independent Africa are condemned by African as well as non-African critics. In 1984 the Nigerian historian J. U. J. Asiegbu contrasted the 'patriotism and probity, ... self discipline and other remarkable ideals of public responsibility with the bad and dishonest example ..., the criminal wastage, the fraudulent and selfish mismanagement of the continent's resources by the new "predatory elites" in post colonial Africa'.¹ Another critic pointed to the fact that 'gone is the enthusiasm of the first years of independence; in its stead are frustration and indolence. Mass electoral participation in Africa has neither given the masses significant amounts of practical power nor allowed them to dictate to the elite. And voting has certainly not increased their material well-being'.² Implicit in these quotations is the fact that democracy as demanded by nationalist leaders has failed, and the frequently expressed maxim that good government is no substitute for self-government³ did not materialise in the economic affluence so dearly anticipated from 'uhuru'.



Independent Africa

Consequences of colonialism

Critics have often blamed Africa's colonial legacy of underdevelopment for the continent's misery. Although a black historian once typified the colonial period as merely 'an episode in African history',⁴ this short period in the continent's age-old history was one of dramatic change and the leaders of independent Africa undoubtedly had to struggle with the consequences of colonialism. The large number of small states that existed in pre-colonial times was reduced to 46 countries with arbitrary political boundaries which did not give due consideration to the ethnic differences within the continent. Some of these states are very small, others are landlocked and isolated from any trading outlet. Railway lines, roads, bridges and mines appeared. Cities developed – often with a character different from that of the continent's traditional cities. The people of Africa underwent changes too. Christianity and Marxism made their appearance, and Islam expanded its influence. The languages of the European conquerors became the *lingua franca*. Detribalisation occurred, particularly in the new urban environment, bringing new lifestyles that vied with traditional tribal and ethnic loyalties. These did not disappear fully, however. Though affected by alien influences, tribal loyalties often persisted, and some caused conflict in independent Africa.

Economic changes

Economically the continent underwent perhaps its greatest change: the small locally oriented pre-colonial economies were slowly integrated into the international, capitalist-dominated economic system. But independent Africa had to deal with capitalist as well as non-capitalist power blocks. This placed the continent into a difficult position – one which it was not suitably equipped to handle.⁵

Neo-colonialism

As part of the international world, African leaders were not in the same position as their pre-colonial forefathers had been. They were not free to determine the continent's economic future without foreign influence. Instead, one of the great challenges of independence was to advance the continent towards full-scale economic independence compatible with the political sovereignty most of them had obtained in the 1960s. Seen in this light, sovereignty was merely the start of the independence process.⁶ Africa's sudden exposure to the harsh, unfriendly world of economic self-interest and its involvement in the ideological struggle between East and West gave rise to the criticism of neo-colonialism, aimed mainly at the West. As defined by Nkrumah, a neo-colonial state received 'all the outward trappings of international sovereignty [but] in reality its economic system and thus its political policy [was] directed from outside'.⁷ The independence so readily granted by the colonial powers when they scrambled for Africa, in this view, was a mere sham.

THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGE

Expectations of prosperity

Despite Africa's growth rate in the 1950s being higher than that of South Asia and Latin America in the same decade, the utopian expectations of wealth and prosperity created by African nationalist leaders had no precedent in economic history elsewhere in the world. After independence in the 1960s, Africa's average per capita growth rate declined from 2.4 per cent to 2.2 per cent. Although this rose again during the first half of the 1970s,⁸ economic realities in Africa did not underwrite the continent's aspirations of prosperity.

- Problems of market economies** At the time of independence, the economies of the individual states were small and oriented mainly towards subsistence agriculture. Seventy per cent of black Africa's population lived on the land and only a small proportion formed a market-oriented sector. These market-type economies were concentrated mostly along the West African coastline, while there was also some production for world markets from blacks in Uganda. In East, Central and southern Africa, both agriculture and mining were in European hands. The export commodities produced by these states were for the most part limited to one or two products – depending on the fluctuation of prices on world markets. Some of the newly independent countries lacked export commodities of any significance,⁹ and efforts to expand the variety of commodities produced for foreign markets were unsuccessful because of the lack of expertise in cultivation and in increasing their production.¹⁰
- Bureaucratic control** This situation put Africa's initial prosperity, as reflected in the quoted per capita growth rates, in a poor light. In the aftermath of independence, and because of advice from visiting foreign experts, most African leaders settled for some kind of socialist or semi-socialist solution for future economic policy. In Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Ethiopia (after the fall of Haile Selassie) the Marxist-Leninist form of socialism was favoured, while states such as Ghana, Guinea and Tanzania were more selective, taking only what suited them from the various forms of socialism. Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire (the Ivory Coast) and Zaïre opted for a more capitalist approach. Whatever their ideological standpoint, the difference between the socialist and capitalist inclined states was more in name than in substance. In countries where the capitalist philosophy was favoured, governments retained considerable control over the economy. Houphouët-Boigny, Kenyatta and Mobutu Sese Seko all made use of one-party-state propaganda, a large bureaucracy and strict security to establish the economic development plans they preferred. In the nominally socialist states there was also a large class of bureaucrats with power to make financial loans and invest money in real estate and business undertakings.¹¹
- Sources of economic growth** Whatever the ideological preference of Africa's individual states, economic policy was based on the small market-oriented agricultural sector for the realisation of economic growth. African rulers wanted an increasing share in world trade and progressive industrial development, because it was obvious that this was the foundation of the economic prosperity of South Africa, the continent's strongest economic power, and the relatively prosperous Arab countries north of the Sahara. But Africa is a continent of extremes. Much of its potential wealth comes from about 5 per cent of its total surface – which produces in turn about 85 per cent of its output. The key to the economic wealth of its southern tip and the countries along the Mediterranean is not necessarily valid for tropical Africa.
- Economic policy: North Africa** Governments in black Africa began to buy their countries' export crops at prices below those which prevailed on world markets. They then sold these on foreign markets at current world prices. The income derived from this source, added to the income realised from taxes, was then used to finance economic and social development – education, for example, enjoyed high priority in many cases. Housing was also given precedence,

because it was felt that a contented, comfortable urban community was necessary in order to stimulate the desired industrial growth. It was calculated that application of this type of economic programme would lessen the continent's dependence on imports, lead to an improved balance of trade, make the continent less dependent on foreign loans and ease the payment of existing loans. The Arab countries north of the Sahara had the same preference, but the Mediterranean countries were part of the European and Middle Eastern commercial world long before black Africa was drawn into the global economy after partition. This is also true of foreign investment and industrial development. The exception here was Morocco, which remained isolated until 1912, while Libya was the most backward North African state until oil was discovered there in 1960. Egypt struggled with problems of overpopulation and high inflation, as well as the cost of its continued wars with Israel. These prevented Egypt from matching the economic growth rate attained by Tunisia and Algeria.

**Decline
in agri-
cultural
produc-
tivity**

During the 1960s this economic policy met with reasonable success and black Africa enjoyed a growth rate of 3 to 4 per cent – a figure which was even higher in the Arab countries of North Africa. This was not a true reflection of the economic tendencies of the decade. Agriculture, upon which the growth of the other sectors of the economy was based, grew at a mere 1.4 per cent between 1965 and 1967 compared with a growth of 2.6 per cent before about 1950. Per capita production also declined between 1964 and 1968 and the futile efforts to diversify agricultural commodities limited Africa's export crops to cocoa and coffee – which represented 44 per cent of black Africa's exports in 1968.¹² The belief that the agricultural sector had to provide the surpluses necessary for other development created a situation in which farmers were exploited. Governments made them subject to undue control, and marketing boards paid less than current world prices for their crops. Disheartened by this, many returned to mere subsistence farming and a dramatic fall in agricultural productivity set in. This was then followed by smuggling across the borders, resulting in their closure, which prevented the necessary economic cooperation between the African states. Many farmers moved to the cities where they hoped to find better economic prospects and a more comfortable life.

**Declin-
ing
ability
to pro-
duce
food**

The sharp fall in agricultural productivity had a serious effect on Africa's ability to feed its population. During the colonial days Africa could feed itself with ease – its total food imports amounted to only 3 per cent in 1960. In 1980 this figure was 30 per cent while 24 African countries depended on emergency food supplies. Two thirds of Mozambique's imports were foodstuffs, while a country such as Ethiopia was fed almost entirely by Western relief. Incessant wars, coups and the declining condition of roads, railways and bridges all played a role in the decline of Africa's ability to produce food.

**Geo-
graphi-
cal dis-
advan-
tages**

Government policy is not the only factor which contributed to this position. Africa's geography, with few natural harbours and navigable rivers, has impeded the construction and maintenance of communication lines. Climatically it is not highly suited to agriculture. Rainfall is sparse and irregular, and three crippling droughts, in 1973–1974, 1977–1978 and 1982–1984, hit the continent just as it began to experience difficulty in selling products on the international market when the oil crisis set in. Ninety per cent of the continent is subject to climatic disadvantages: 40 per cent is dry or desert land, 40

per cent is savanna and 20 per cent tropical forest. The soil is poor and tends to leach easily, with the resultant loss of organic material and fertility. Less than 7 per cent of Africa's land is arable and capable of yielding regular crop. Locusts and stock and animal diseases affect both plants and animals, and the accepted system of extensive farming, as opposed to intensive farming, is not soundly based.¹³ In the light of all these factors, it is clear that farming deserved far greater sympathy from official circles than it received from African governments and marketing boards. This includes the provision of information on the best methods of producing crops for a market economy and of overcoming the disadvantageous circumstances prevalent in Africa.

**Grow-
ing
bureau-
cracy** An initial lack of properly trained manpower also contributed to Africa's inability to provide farmers with the necessary guidance which would enable agriculture to fulfil the role assigned to it by the continent's leaders. The Africanisation introduced by the colonial powers after World War II came too late to supply the expertise when independence was granted and most of those who had some education found that it was in areas that did not cater for the post-colonial demand. In a state such as Zaïre, where violence and civil war accompanied the arrival of independence, many whites were frightened off, and in the process the country lost 10 000 civil servants as well as its white settler population. The same happened in the former Portuguese colonies, where doctrinaire Marxism took control and the whites were afraid to stay. In other countries expatriate workers served in the first years after independence: in Zambia this figure was as high as 62 per cent, but it was far less in Nigeria where the total amounted to 13 per cent. With the stricter control introduced by African governments and the preference for socialism, governments tended to take too much upon their own shoulders. Central planning, state corporations, nationalisation and the regulation of the lives of the masses demanded an ever-growing bureaucracy. This resulted in the increase of this sector of society at the rate of between 7 and 8 per cent from the time independence had been granted. Civil servants received high salaries but were incapable of running the country's economy efficiently.

Between 50 and 55 per cent of Africa's working population are in some form of government service and draw about 30 per cent of the continent's national income in the form of salaries; all of which contributes to a negative growth rate. The same tendency applies to the parastatals. Corruption is rife in these unwieldy institutions. The military coup in Nigeria in 1983 was a direct result of corruption, but the military was incapable of stopping officials who issued licences or contracts only in exchange for money or some other favour.¹⁴

**Popula-
tion ex-
plosion** Another reason for Africa's economic decline and chronic food shortages is the population explosion that set in after independence. While food production increased by only 1 per cent per annum, the population grew at an average of 2.5 to 4 per cent a year in about 1970. This is the highest in the world. The average life expectancy on the continent rose from 39 to 47 years, while the infant death rate dropped from 39 per 1 000 to 25 per 1 000 in the mid-eighties. The population growth stimulated the rate of urbanisation and it is calculated that Africa's urban population doubled between 1960

and 1979 and that more than a fifth of the continent's population lived in towns and cities in 1980.¹⁵

Industrial growth

Accelerated urbanisation did not result in increased industrial development. In many countries independence was disastrous for industrial growth. In Uganda, Zaïre, Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, the confiscation of businesses and the destruction of tools, plants and suburban areas contributed to the breakdown of industry. This tendency was not limited to countries where violence accompanied the independence process. In Ghana, Nkrumah inherited a financially sound country, a model colony in Lord Hailey's words, boasting a robust non-plantation peasant economy. He chose to replace it with strict state control, a one-party dictatorship and excessive regulation: this brought economic decline and political instability which the country has not been able to shake off in the more than two decades since his fall.¹⁶

Growth rate

Although mining grew rapidly in the first years after independence, the continent's share in world trade dwindled. This did not improve during the seventies; economic growth became stagnant with decreasing exports and growth lagged behind other industrial countries between 1962 and 1977.¹⁷ In that stage of Africa's economic history the continent's population was still too small to support sufficient domestic markets even for simple secondary industries. When commodity prices dropped in 1974, Africa was seriously hit and countries such as Zambia and Zaïre, who had prospered as a result of the export of copper, came to the brink of bankruptcy. Black Africa's growth rate fell to 1 per cent in 1976¹⁸ and what growth there was, was absorbed by the population explosion. In 1976 Africa had 7.5 per cent of the world's population but produced only 1.2 per cent of the globe's gross national product. Of the population, 74 per cent was still illiterate compared to 47 per cent in Asia and 57 per cent in Latin America. This decline continued into the eighties. In 1979, 25 of the 39 sub-Saharan states were among the world's poorest. In contrast, the North African oil-producing countries were more prosperous, with Libya topping the list. Its very small population has the highest per capita income in Africa (\$5 000) followed by Algeria with a figure of \$1 800; Morocco and Tunisia with about \$850 each and Egypt with \$500. In sub-Saharan Africa, Gabon, another oil producer, averages \$3 250 and the general growth rate in black Africa of 3 to 4 per cent is behind that of the Arab countries who average between 6 and 8 per cent.¹⁹

Sources of energy

External economic factors had a severe effect on the industrial development African leaders envisaged at the time of independence. Modernisation and industrial development put high demands on the availability of cheap sources of energy. Coal was not available to all the newly independent states – Zimbabwe, Zambia, Morocco, Nigeria and Botswana were the exceptions. Those who tried to generate electricity soon found that it was a capital-intensive undertaking, dependent on transnational corporations and their specific needs for this form of energy. Ghana, Zaïre, and Zambia experienced the outcome of problems related to the generation of this form of energy. Consequently African states preferred petroleum products: a cheap source of energy prior to the 1970s. Then prices began to rise, initially during the Yom Kippur War in 1973 when the Arabs, in their endeavour to bring down the Israeli state, used this as a political weapon

against the West for supporting Israel. Prices increased again as a result of the war between Iraq and Iran which began in 1981, and amounted to a twenty-fold rise in less than a decade, making oil an extremely expensive source of energy.

Inflation In Africa the higher oil price fuelled large-scale inflation. An inflation rate of between 2 and 3 per cent during the sixties increased to 10 per cent in the next decade, and in some cases it rose as high as 30 per cent. Developed countries worldwide were also affected, and those to whom Africa looked as a market for its export products and capital funds were unable to oblige as they had done prior to the oil crises. Inflation also had an effect on Africa's own oil producers, since they had to spend more money to obtain capital and consumer goods from the developed countries. By 1979 there was a depression in world trade at a stage when it was of the utmost importance for African countries to maximise their incomes from the export of primary agricultural and mineral produce in order to secure funds for their own industrial growth and offset the effect of growing food shortages. Prices did not keep pace with inflation when the continent had to spend more and more of its declining earnings to buy food on world markets. With exports declining at about 1.45 per cent per annum, African countries had to spend about 14 per cent of their foreign earnings on food imports and another 14 per cent on fuel.

Foreign loans During the eighties Africa's weakening foreign trade caused an inability to repay its foreign loans. Two thirds of Zaïre's foreign earnings in 1982, for example, was needed to service the costs of loans it made the previous year. Sudan suffered the same fate and the once prosperous Côte d'Ivoire had to use 40 per cent of its foreign income to service its debts. The costs to service Nigeria's foreign debt increased from 10 per cent of its earnings in 1982 to 15 per cent in 1983.²⁰

Lack of accountability for funds It was assumed that foreign aid would cure most of Africa's economic ills. Aid was provided for a wide variety of reasons, including contradicting purposes such as efforts to develop the continent's backward economy, reparation for the real or imagined wrongs of colonisation, to serve as a bulwark against revolution and/or communism, to attract allies, or simply to obtain markets for export goods. In most instances the effect was counterproductive because it strengthened bureaucratic lobbies, promoted unprofitable expenditure, led to the rezoning of money to private bank accounts, etc., and in some cases increased inflation. Foreign aid was not given according to specific planning, and the allocation of funds often went hand in hand with changing political circumstances. Accountability for the use of these funds was often scant or non-existent.²¹

IMF and World Bank Africa's foreign debts remained – in spite of foreign aid. This forced the African countries to approach the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to reschedule these debts. In the process these institutions placed limitations on the economic freedom of many African states. This in turn injured the credit-worthiness of these states at a stage when they were sorely in need of further funds to enable them to keep in pace with the rest of the world. Because the World Bank and the IMF are institutions of the Western capitalist nations, the commitments they demanded from the African states evoked renewed accusations of neo-colonialism and, in the case of

Zambia, for instance, the blame for that country's continuing economic problems was placed squarely on the World Bank and the IMF.²²

Political instability Economically, independent Africa does not offer a very comfortable existence, and the general dissatisfaction of the masses, who expected more from 'uhuru' than they received, created a widespread feeling of pessimism. Relations between the masses and their rulers often soured as dreams and hopes faded. They became disillusioned with their rulers, and the one-party systems that had been introduced resulted in political instability and the increasing role of the military in politics.

THE FATE OF WESTERN DEMOCRACY

Inhibiting factors The granting of political power to the African colonies coincided with the hope that liberal democracy and political stability would pave the way for economic development. Factors such as the lack of real national unity, the continued influence of tribalism or ethnicity and the inability of the African economy to realise the utopian promises the nationalistic leaders had made, changed these hopes into something superficial. Full appreciation of these limitations was absent both among Africa's new leaders and the imperial powers who granted political independence.

Euro-pean-style government In most new states, independence did not bring immediate change. Nationalist leaders replaced the colonial masters, and whites who remained filled some senior posts temporarily in the civil service, education, the army and police. The constitutions granted by the imperial powers showed clearly that the nationalist leaders would simply not accept anything less than the types of systems which functioned in the motherland.²³ English-speaking Africa was granted Westminster-type parliaments and the multiparty system of government with a ruling party and an official opposition. The French, strongly under the influence of the Gaullist example of the day, granted constitutions where a president was both head of state and the head of government. The strongest party, to which the president also belonged, completely dominated the state.²⁴ The capitulating Belgians introduced a constitution to the Congo reflecting their own system: one in which the king reigned, but did not govern. Both the president and the prime minister of the independent Congo enjoyed executive power²⁵ in a system that would have been difficult to implement easily and successfully even in Belgium. With the demise of the Portuguese empire, Marxist-Leninist parties took power in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. They introduced their own forms of government in which a president and central committee of the party which had gained power ruled in a one-party state.

Dissatisfaction The African masses who voted the new nationalist leaders into power expected them to introduce immediate improvements and to provide what they had promised during the election campaigns that preceded the granting of independence. The effect of irresponsible promises, for example the undertaking given by leaders in the Belgian Congo that they would repay all taxes levied during the colonial period, as well as ensuring liberty and plenty,²⁶ became real expectations. The people were not satisfied with the simple replacement of colonial governors with black faces, especially when

they merely occupied the houses of the former colonial masters, drove the same or bigger cars than the imperial masters, made use of the colonial government's servants and used its technical and administrative institutions, its police and its army. But, on the other hand, Africa lacked the resources to satisfy the immediate demands made by radical elements that poverty and ignorance be eradicated. To this type of demand, there was no instant solution and the masses could not get what they desired in the immediate short term. The new governments saw the solution in the extension of education and in some cases more than half of their national revenues were spent in this way. The result was only partially successful. National consciousness grew, but it also stimulated dissatisfaction with rural life which in turn accelerated urbanisation and unemployment. Job opportunities in the cities were limited since industrial growth to provide these could follow only when agriculture provided the necessary funds to finance the development of domestic industries.

One-party state

These circumstances did not favour the constitutional dispensation the former imperial powers had in mind. African rulers became unwilling to submit themselves to regular general elections and regarded Western-style party politics as a luxury they could ill afford. Many were concerned only in the promotion of their own wellbeing. Opposition parties offering real or imagined solutions to the socioeconomic problems Africa experienced became a threat: they might reveal the affluence the governing elite enjoyed while the masses, becoming increasingly alienated from the government, remained poor. For the ruling elite, salvation lay in the one-party state where a single political party represented the whole nation. Such a party could govern without the interference of an opposition that was often based upon tribal or ethnic divisions. The cultural and historical inheritance that backed the multiparty political system in Europe was simply meaningless when introduced into Africa and, what is more, African leaders regarded the one-party system as a modern equivalent of the traditional African form of government. To use Julius Nyerere's simile, African tradition did not set any store by periodic voting in a free election; instead, the people's will was determined by the elders debating under a village tree.²⁷

Preference for African style

The European-oriented constitutions also detracted from the reality of Africa's independence in the eyes of some black leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah. He was looking for something more African when he introduced one-party rule in Ghana. Nkrumah already thought along such lines on the eve of the Gold Coast's independence and in his autobiography, which appeared shortly before Ghana's independence, he stated that freedom required some totalitarian back-up since it could survive only with such discipline.²⁸ To make this change more acceptable to the masses, Nkrumah and Nyerere characterised the one-party state as a national government in the war against poverty – its introduction being a necessary step to move closer to the affluence which nationalist leaders had promised their supporters during the independence campaigns. In Ghana, Nkrumah wanted to build an African socialist state upon the sound colonial economy he inherited from the British. To do this he introduced a virtually one-party state by the end of 1957.

Authoritarianism A one-party state implied that politically neutral civil servants made way for party officials, while other members of the party took command of the police and armed forces. Trade unions were penetrated, and broadcasting and the press were captured to serve the ruling party. In this process most African states became authoritarian, and in the mid-eighties parliaments survived only in Gambia, Kenya, Botswana and Zimbabwe, although there was a strong move towards one-party rule in the latter state. Only Gambia, Kenya and Morocco are able to boast a free press. One-party states also signify extended presidential powers including the right to interfere in the judiciary. Judges who handed down unacceptable verdicts were simply removed. The exceptions to this rule are Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

West Africa The introduction of one-party rule began in earnest in French-speaking West Africa. Some of these states, such as Guinea and the Côte d'Ivoire, were one-party states at the time of independence. In fact the Ivorian leader, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, referred to the RDA as a political movement and not a party in the real sense of the word, since there was no opposition to it during decolonisation. Other West African states followed suit. In Senegal the official opposition, tired of being powerless, amalgamated with Senghor's party six years after independence. The same peaceful move towards this form of government took place in Kenya when Kadu was dissolved in order to unite with Kanu. In these cases the opposition did not necessarily share the view of a national front against poverty but realised that governments were usually more amicable towards friends than towards political enemies. The availability of substantial rewards was often the strongest motive for unification with the governing party. Tanu in Tanzania was the only political party – which meant that it was only a short step away from the one-party system in the former mandated territory.

Military coups The one-party system rang the deathknell for the ideals of liberal democracy as seen through European eyes. In many cases it was the introduction of a system of government by plots and violence because the people surrendered their political rights and became powerless to remove any government whose policies they found unacceptable.²⁹ The army, upon which the politicians relied for support after the introduction of the one-party system, was in a strong position, and could forcibly remove undesirable rulers who were incapable of ensuring popular support for their policies. This triggered off a spate of military coups in Africa. Between 1961 and December 1991 there were 80 violent coups; 23 leaders were killed either in assassinations or executions, while there were also 12 forced resignations or dismissals in Africa.³⁰ In the mid-eighties there were 20 one-party states in Africa and 21 military dictatorships.³¹

THE ARMY AND AFRICAN POLITICS

Growing military prestige In the last days of colonialism, African armies were small and unobtrusive, usually recruited from apolitical or, as one author puts it, 'backward'³² sections of the population. White expatriates commanded these armies while a few blacks, trained in the mother country, became senior officers in the fifties. After independence the politicians enjoyed the loyalty of these commanders as well as that of the police chiefs, but the new rulers and the masses disliked the colonial composition of the armies, feeling that

independent states were entitled to be proud of their own defence forces commanded by their own people. The influence of the army also grew in significance in these years as a result of border disputes between certain states. Outside powers, anxious to form friendly ties with the new states, provided more sophisticated arms which also contributed to the greater prestige of the military in the new states.

Coups d'état Another important change was accelerated Africanisation, especially in Central Africa. Mutinies that occurred there in the early sixties were aimed at getting improved payment, improved conditions and quicker Africanisation rather than demands to change the governmental systems of the day. The Belgian Congo (Zaire) paved the way, followed by a mutiny in Tanganyika. Similar action soon spread to neighbouring Kenya and Uganda. By the middle of the sixties most African armies were under the control of their own officers, many of whom were trained in the former mother countries. They became part of a small elite group forming a definite *esprit de corps*, a spirit that was lacking in the first years after independence. Some officers developed a distinct political awareness which had a revolutionary potential, fed by their involvement in the discussion of political matters while in training. Knowledge of what others thought of their countries and the grievances that existed also played a role. The armies themselves were politicised by being used against political dissidents within their borders. Also an army career ensured better living conditions which meant that recruitment, the selection of officers and the granting of promotion were political actions. The care with which the old colonial powers had selected the members of their armed forces disappeared and soon it seemed that tribal tensions and loyalties could not be divorced from military affairs – as subsequent developments in Nigeria show. As some officers began to think that they could improve on the performance of the politicians, the temptation to seize power increased. Coups in Africa were relatively easy, since the army was undoubtedly the strongest institution in any African state. In most cases the seizure of a presidential palace, a broadcasting station, an airport and a few arrests sufficed. It was often government cuts in expenditure involving the army, combined with general dissatisfaction, which sparked these coups and this type of action spread like a scourge throughout the continent, especially in black Africa.

Ghana Nasser's coup in Egypt (1953) was the first military takeover in Africa, and General Ibrahim Abboud intervened in Sudan in 1958. Five years later black Togolese soldiers murdered President Sylvanus Olympio. These were the forerunners and the Ghanaian coup of 1966 sparked off a whole series of military takeovers. With its good natural resources and a relatively well-educated population, Ghana was in a position to handle its own affairs and develop its resources, but Nkrumah soon discovered that it was easier to criticise the existing government than to govern.³³ In 1960 Ghana became a republic in which Nkrumah, as head of state, held extensive powers, including the right to appoint and dismiss civil servants as well as the chief judge. In 1964 the introduction of a one-party state was approved by a referendum. Nkrumah, however, had much wider visions and squandered the country's reserves on expensive prestige projects which failed to generate income and contributed nothing to the welfare of the people. Another shortcoming was corruption; Nkrumah failed to curb the self-interest of many

of his party members. In 1966 the world cocoa price dropped, and this led to a drastic reduction of this essential income; the country's credit economy slumped to a situation of serious debt. Ghanaian troops who were part of the United Nations force in the Congo between 1960 and 1963 became dissatisfied with their role there, and were also critical at having to serve under white commanding officers. They identified their criticism of their position and Nkrumah's policies with the grievances of other Ghanaians. At home the activities of groups of workers disturbed the soldiers and they decided to oust Nkrumah from power while he was on a visit to Beijing. Widespread rejoicing followed the termination of his regime which has been called 'the nightmare of 1957-1966'.³⁴

Deficiencies of military regimes

Military coups were usually followed by radio broadcasts abusing the fallen government and detailing all its wrongs. The new rulers usually lacked any definite exposition of future policy but this did not curb the lofty expectations of the people, ignorant as they often were of the fact that the military regimes were not necessarily equipped for the task they had taken upon themselves. Poverty, inequality, underdevelopment, ethnicity, poor national unity and political instability did not disappear. The technical and administrative skills at the military's disposal were not better than those enjoyed by their predecessors. The military had to depend on the same bureaucracy that served the former governments and had to cope with the same dissatisfied ethnic groups and trade unions. Support from them was less because of conviction than because of hope, and these groups soon lost their enthusiasm for the new regimes.

Dictatorships

After a takeover, the military had various courses it could follow. In some cases the officers retained power despite being incapable of governing. The result was dictatorships which were more corrupt, ruthless and tyrannical than the regimes they replaced – as the people of Uganda would testify to the situation after Idi Amin seized power in 1971. Others shared power with the politicians and some aimed at the reintroduction of civilian government after general elections. This was the case in Ghana. The National Liberation Council, which survived a junior officers' coup in 1967, were bent on the introduction of a new constitution within three years and in 1969 political parties and a legislative assembly were reinstated. Kofi Busia, who was a conservative politician and leader of the opposition to Nkrumah before Ghana became a one-party state, came to power. Busia 'epitomised the opposite of everything'³⁵ Nkrumah had stood for.

Ghana: new democracy

Further coups in Ghana

The new democracy soon ran into numerous difficulties including the empty treasury, drained reserves and a falling cocoa price. All this sparked another coup in 1972. The constitution of 1969 was abolished, and a National Redemption Council held power until it was replaced by a Supreme Military Council in 1975 which planned to change to a civilian government in 1979. Despite this, relations between the new civilian government and the military remained tense and in 1979 dissatisfied officers and civilians seized power once again. Their resolution to reintroduce parliamentary rule was unsuccessful and in December 1981 they concluded that only a 'pragmatic revolution' in Ghanaian society could solve the country's problems. A Provisional National Defence Council was introduced under the chairmanship of Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, who led the 1979 coup.

Coups in North Africa From the early sixties, Africa was subjected to a vast number of coups. Between 1963 and 1987 there were no fewer than sixty successful coup attempts in black Africa. In North Africa, notably Egypt, coups also took place. Nasser overthrew the king in 1953 and his government survived the stormy and uncertain Middle Eastern politics until his death in 1970. He was succeeded by Anwar el-Sadat, who was killed while still serving as president. In Libya, Muammar el-Qadhafi followed Nasser's example in 1969 and replaced the Libyan monarchy with Arab socialism after his assumption of power. Hassan II of Morocco was the only monarch in North Africa who survived a military coup. Algeria's Ahmad Ben Bella fell victim to a coup in 1965 but after Colonel Houari Boumédiénne's death in 1978, succession was orderly. Presidential elections took place regularly until 1991 when the Islamic Salvation Front received unexpected support at the polls. This precipitated a coup, executed three weeks after the election, to prevent the fundamentalist Islamic movement from gaining more influence. The coup failed, and this led to the dramatic murder of President Mohamed Boudiaf on 29 January 1992. The Algerian government obviously misread the radical inclinations of the fundamentalists in the country.³⁷ Habib Bourguiba, the architect of Tunisia's independence, was ousted in a palace revolution in November 1987 – his successor, Ben Ali, held that Bourguiba was too old and senile to continue as president.

Situation south of the Sahara South of the Sahara, some governments remained stable. In Botswana, the Cameroon, Gabun, Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia the transfer of power was orderly, but this does not mean that political violence was completely absent. Tanganyika, Kenya and Gabun all experienced mutinies in 1964 and these were brought under control only by the military intervention of the former colonial powers, Britain and France. Countries attaining independence since 1974, such as Cape Verde, Djibouti, São Tomé and Príncipe, enjoyed stability, whereas Zimbabwe experienced ethnic violence between the Matabele and Shona factions of its population in the years immediately after independence. This did not result in any violent changes of government, however. Angola was ravaged by civil war from 1975 but the MPLA was still in power in 1993. Frelimo in Mozambique, saddled with armed revolt, has managed to remain in power since 1974.

Tanzania The high occurrence of coups sounded a word of warning to the few remaining civilian governments on the continent. They made a variety of reforms, including the reform of their parties, in order to avoid suffering the same fate. In Tanzania, Nyerere withdrew from public life to devote his time to the reorganisation of Tanu. In 1965 he set up a system – a parody of true democracy – where voters could choose between rival candidates all belonging to Tanu. Although no other country was willing to allow this kind of freedom, Nyerere's concession to democracy was very limited, because the principles upon which Tanzania was governed – the issue of socialism embodied in 'ujamaa' – was closed. No discussion or debate of any kind was permitted, nor was there any opportunity to alter or modify the system.³⁸ This contrasts with Malawi, where President Hastings Banda's domineering personality led him towards a one-party state. By 1973 the Malawi Congress Party was completely in his hands. He elects the candidates for the country's national convention and they are expected to comply with the requirements set by him.

THE PROBLEM OF ETHNIC DISUNITY

- Ethnic heterogeneity: Rwanda and Burundi** Ethnic heterogeneity, not always as a result of colonial boundaries, often caused problems. In the densely populated Rwanda and Burundi, the Tutsi pastoralists maintained their dominance over the agriculturally oriented Hutu. After independence, considerable communal violence broke out, but in Rwanda this set in even before independence. The Hutu rose against the Tutsi, and many Tutsi were slaughtered while others found refuge in neighbouring Uganda. After a military takeover in Rwanda in 1973, these fugitives were offered guarantees of safe return to Rwanda. In Burundi the Tutsi monarchy survived until 1966, but under the military regime that followed the fine balance between Tutsi and Hutu was upset and a brutal rebellion broke out in 1972, resulting in the killing of about 100 000 Hutu. Many fled the country before two further coups which occurred in 1976 and 1987.
- Uganda** There was ethnic tension in Uganda between the economically backward and stateless Nilotic societies in the north and the more advanced Bantu kingdoms in the south. The south had a working relationship with the British during the colonial period and maintained this position at the time of independence when a British alliance was formed with the northerner Milton Obote and the Buganda chiefs in the south – a ruling which was a prerequisite for independence. Obote, who led Uganda to independence, became prime minister while the king, or kabaka, of the Buganda was elected president. Obote's position was tenuous as long as the kabaka's kingdom, an independent power base, remained intact. He moved against the kabaka in 1966 and, with a force comprising mainly northerners, drove the kabaka out. A year later Obote acted against the remaining southern kingdoms – moves designed to serve his own personal benefit. His conduct became more arbitrary, and in 1971 the officer who had led the onslaught against the kabaka, Idi Amin, ousted Obote from power. Amin's action enjoyed wide support, but eventually his actions became even more arbitrary and negative than those of Obote. Senseless violence, often undertaken to remove real and imaginary political opponents, became the order of the day. Amin was particularly hostile towards the Asians, the backbone of Uganda's economy, and he drove them out of the country. Uganda became destitute and chaos reigned. Conditions worsened when the army degenerated into disorder in 1978. Amin tried to divert attention from his failure to restore order by invading Tanzania, where Obote and many Ugandan fugitives had found sanctuary. The invasion failed; Amin was overthrown and fled the country while a provisional government took control.
- Nyerere** Nyerere supported Obote and regarded him as Uganda's legitimate ruler, but the Ugandans disagreed among themselves as to what action should be taken. While Tanzanian troops remained in the country, Obote won an election held in 1980 and was reinstated as president. After the withdrawal of the occupational force Uganda fell into disarray and chaos again. Guerrilla bands emerged throughout the country – supposedly in support of some leader or ideology. Obote failed to keep control in a situation where the army and these bands could not be distinguished from one another and in 1985 another northerner, Lieutenant General Tito Okello, intervened and suspended the constitution. A military council became the executive authority.

- Museveni** Uganda remained in chaos until Yoweri Museveni emerged. Museveni was a guerrilla leader from the west who managed to organise his forces into a disciplined and purposeful force and who had some experience of government as a former minister. By 1986 Museveni managed to defeat his rivals and gain control of Kampala, Uganda's capital.
- Sudan** To the north of Uganda, Sudan suffered similar problems. Its southern Nilotic population are of the same ethnic origin as Uganda's northern people, and fugitives from both countries often found refuge across the border. This made it easy for them to intervene again in their own countries when it suited them to do so. Another similarity was that the people of the northern Sudan and those in southern Uganda both benefited from political and educational experience. When the parliamentary system ran into difficulties in 1958, General Ibrahim Abboud executed a coup and restored order in the north. He failed to do so in the south, where a rebellion broke out in 1955 after British officials were replaced by Sudanese officials from the north. Because of strikes and unrest in Khartoum, Abboud was forced to return power to civilians in 1964, and they offered the southerners an amnesty. A new attempt at parliamentary rule failed, however, and led to the coup of 1969 in which Jaafar al-Nimeri took power. In 1971 he made himself president.
- Nimeri** Nimeri tried to solve the southern problem militarily, but after much bloodshed and hostile foreign criticism, especially from Christian churches, he turned to negotiation and in 1972 he agreed to give the south autonomy. This did not change the south's hostility – in fact it became worse when Nimeri decided to replace the British legal system with Islamic law. When this was eventually introduced in 1983, a major rebellion launched by the Sudanese Liberation Movement confined government troops to the major towns. The implementation of Islamic law in the north ran into difficulties too, and forced Nimeri to introduce martial law in 1984 before he was ousted in a coup in 1986. General Swar ad-Dahab intended to reintroduce parliamentary rule, but by 1988 famine, locusts and the endemic civil war in the south posed continuous trouble. He did manage to obtain a reconciliation agreement in November which included a ceasefire, the freezing of the implementation of Islamic law and a constitutional conference. Despite this, political instability grew worse as opponents of the agreement caused unrest in Khartoum, which was already in turmoil as a result of food shortages and rising prices; yet another coup was attempted. Conditions worsened when floods left 1.5 million people homeless. In 1989 a successful coup took place which shattered all hopes of any settlement with the south since the new regime was adamant about the application of Islamic law. Further efforts to rid the country of its government followed but these had disastrous results for the rebels. In 1990 Sudan moved closer to Iraq in the Gulf Crisis. This aroused severe criticism. The country was politically isolated and its problems concerning the south, as well as its enormous foreign debt, remained unsettled. Similar ethnic and religious disunity existed in Chad, and in 1976 the Western Saharans began a struggle for separate status.

THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR

The Nigerian civil war, one of Africa's endemic ethnic wars, broke out in 1967 and drew wide international attention. In contrast to Chad, which is Africa's largest and poorest country, Nigeria has the richest natural resources – especially oil, which went into production in the 1950s. Nigeria is also Africa's most densely populated state.

Federation Nigeria became independent as a constitutional monarchy with a multiparty system based upon the federal principle and became a republic in 1963. The federation consisted of three regions. The north – with a population bigger than the other two areas combined – was ruled in association by the Muslim Fulbe and Hausa. The south of Nigeria was divided into the east, dominated by the Ibo, and the west, where the Yoruba were the strongest group. The multiparty system upon which the federation was built 'meant that one political party – one region, one ethnicity – would always be excluded from office, and by extension from rewards and patronage available at the federal decision making level'.³⁹ The north was the dominant region and no central government could function without its support. In the other regions there were national parties based on ethnic divisions.

Deteriorating political situation The political situation in Nigeria deteriorated as the federal government failed to solve the country's most pressing problems. Politicians opted for the accumulation of personal wealth and power and this led to a decline of political parties with the politicians exploiting the existing ethnic differences for their personal benefit. In the west, voters were warned against the possible rise of an Ibo empire when these people attempted to get a foothold in that region's economy. Antagonism flared even higher when central Nigeria expressed its dislike for the Hausa and the Ibo middlemen while the north and Calabar did not hide their anger towards Ibo clerks. On the Jos minefields three separate, ethnically based trade unions were formed.⁴⁰

Coup d'état The west was closely affected by the deteriorating political position. In this region the central government kept a political party in power which did not enjoy any support from the voters and in 1964 a general strike occurred there involving 750 000 workers. This was provoked by the disillusionment of the workers: the freedom which independence was supposed to mean had not ensued. Meanwhile, dissatisfaction also simmered in the army. Young officers from the eastern region feared that a plot to northernise the army was in the offing and that it was brewed by politicians from the west and the prime minister, Sir Abubakar Tafewa Balewa, who came from the north. On 15 January 1966 a coup, executed simultaneously in all the regions, resulted in the death of the federal prime minister as well as the prime ministers of the north and the west. The army declared its hostility towards corrupt ministers, political profiteers and swindlers, those who sought bribes at every occasion, and the clumsy federal system. Despite the army's strong views against tribalism, the coup coming from the east had definite ethnic and Ibo leanings.

Violence The new military regime, led by an Ibo, General John Aguiyi-Ironsi, wanted to unite Nigeria and eradicate corruption. Military governors were appointed for the country's four regions, and all political parties were abolished in May 1966. These steps stimu-

lated fear among many Nigerians and provoked a sharp reaction in the form of anti-federal demonstrations in the Muslim north. This was followed by widespread violence against Ibos living there and in July 1966 a second army revolt in the north of Yorubaland led to the death of Ironsi. General Yakubu Gowon, a Christian from a small tribe on the north, emerged as leader, but the easterners, who failed to create a united system, feared the threat of growing violence against them. This broke out in September, and 20 000 Ibo living in the north were killed while about a million escaped back to their homeland.

General Gowon's federal structure; out-break of war Fear of northern dominance in the east convinced this region's military leader, Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwu Ujukwu, not to attend Gowon's proposed constitutional conference. Gowon suggested a federal structure consisting of twelve states in which the large tribes such as the Hausa, the Yoruba and the Ibo would be stripped of their power. Instead the smaller tribes in all the regions would govern. Deadlock seemed obvious, and General Joseph Ankrah of Ghana tried to mediate between Gowon and Ujukwu. This failed to solve any of the major issues, and in March 1967 Ujukwu started to prevent the flow of money to Gowon's central government. Nigeria's oil fields were in the east, but not in Iboland, and Ujukwu's step meant serious financial trouble for Gowon. This apparently did not upset Gowon, and he continued with his constitutional plans. On 27 May 1967 he announced the creation of twelve states, three of them in the east. Ujukwu countered by declaring the east independent as the Republic of Biafra. The central government refused to accept the separation and war broke out. This drew Nigeria into international politics because Britain, who had large investments in the country, and Russia provided the federal forces with arms. Others who sympathised with Biafra supplied the new state with ammunition.

Effects of war Biafra had an enterprising army which gave the new state the initial success before the better arms, larger manpower and a blockade of Biafra began to count against it. About half a million men on each side were involved in the struggle, which not only grew more bitter as time passed, but also caused the death of more than a million people, mostly civilians, who died of famine and disease. The war dragged on until January 1970 before Ujukwu fled, and one of his deputies, Major General Philip Effiong, decided to make peace. Gowon realised that reconstruction and reconciliation were absolutely essential, and he tried to make the Biafrans feel at home in the military and federal governments he created. This was reasonably successful but left many of Nigeria's more pressing problems unresolved. One was weak leadership at the helm and this was the motivation for the coup which General Murtala Mohammed executed in July 1975, ousting Gowon while he was attending an OAU meeting in Uganda.

1975 coup

Coup of 1976 The new military government created seven more states and set a timetable for civilian government before General Muhammed became the victim of another coup in February 1976. The new leader, Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo, a Yoruba, continued with the same programme for civilian government and took further steps to create the desired national unity. At this stage a new factor complicated matters even further. Ethnic differences were joined by class differences in Nigeria's industrial sector and in

1978, on the eve of the country's return to civilian government, tension in the country ran high.

Second republic An executive president stood at the head of Nigeria's second republic, which consisted of 19 states. Five political parties were allowed, and the National Party of Nigeria, lead by a veteran politician, Alhayi Shehu Shagari, emerged victorious in the central government while each of the regional parties were the victors in their heartland. Shagari became president. With the politics of regionalism and ethnicity victorious, the concept of federalism was subjected to a severe test.

Financial crisis The introduction of the federal framework was the first priority in the second republic. The central government depended on the petroleum price for 90 per cent of its revenue. Despite the instability of the price of petroleum, Shagari made large expenditures which depended on income from this source. When the price slumped in April 1982 there was general disillusionment. The federal budget was overextended and a crisis in Nigeria's foreign exchange or valuta caused new panic. Widespread corruption and fiscal malpractices followed Shagari's measures to save financial face in 1982–1983. Nigeria became a debtor nation looking towards the IMF for salvation, while the masses began to suffer hardship. Resentment grew and Muslim-based disturbances occurred in the north. These were suppressed by force. Shagari saw the uprisings as religiously inspired rather than as a outcome of economic deprivation.

Opposition to central government A second challenge for the new republic was the transfer from a British-oriented constitution to an American one. The regional governments opposed federal control over their power, especially that of the National Party of Nigeria. They were unwilling to cut government expenditure or to recognise the existence of an economic crisis and a lack of confidence in the central government developed from 1980. To many, the federal government was seen as a Kaduna-based clique,⁴¹ interested only in safeguarding and maintaining their own positions. Speculation about a one-party state grew as an aura of corruption surrounded the Shagari government.

Another problem was the inability of Shagari to maintain Nigeria's reputation as the giant of black Africa. His dependence on the IMF created the idea that the country was Western-oriented, and his interference in the affairs of Zimbabwe and Angola was overshadowed by the fact that he traded with South Africa. Furthermore, the expulsion in 1983 of more than two million foreigners, mainly from Ghana, Cameroon, Niger and Chad, who had been working on Nigeria's oil fields, poisoned relations with these states.

End of second republic With the approaching 1983 elections, Shagari's position was weak and he experienced massive criticism. Despite this, he was re-elected, but his refusal to acknowledge that the country was experiencing an economic crisis led to his downfall. A coup that was planned in October of that year was executed on the last day of December when Major General Muhammadu Buhari from the Kaduna state took power. As is the case with so many coups in Africa, he referred to the 'psychological and moral damage inflicted on the nation by the violence and malpractices of the 1983 elections'⁴² and Nigeria's second republic came to an end after only four years of unstable existence.

Buhari's regime Buhari's main concern was the country's economic problem. Steps were taken to maintain private undertakings, and attempts were made to postpone the payment of the country's debts to Europe. In September 1984 Buhari failed to get loans from the IMF because of the Fund's strict terms. Efforts to economise, action against malpractices and corrupt politicians, and smuggling with money caused tension. There were accusations that Buhari was biased in favour of northerners. By 1985 it appeared that Buhari did not know how to solve the country's problems while striking medical doctors and students, dissatisfied with the withdrawal of funds for overseas study, added to his headaches. He stubbornly prohibited all discussions on a return to civilian government and continued to expel foreign workers whom he blamed for the country's economic problems. His regime became increasingly dictatorial and sparked Nigeria's seventh coup when Major General Ibrahim Babangida removed him from power on 27 August 1985.

Babangida's regime In contrast to his predecessor, Babangida, who played a prominent role in the Biafran war, did not include any civilians in his government. The regime survived a coup in December 1985, and then announced a return to civilian government, planned for October 1990. Widespread disturbances in the north during 1986–1987 continued to weaken national unity. Babangida joined the Organisation of Islamic Conference, stressing the cultural and religious implications of this step above its political consequences. This was to placate the south who had grave fears concerning the Islamisation of the region. Religious inspired uprisings occurred here and Babangida's government managed to avert a coup in April 1990 in which the dissidents characterised him as being 'drug-baronish, inhumane, sadistic, deceitful, homosexually-centred and unpatriotic'.⁴³ Discussions on the political structure of Nigeria's third republic continued, but the transfer to civilian government was postponed until 1992.

Problems of third republic The country continues to struggle to find a formula for a successful democratic dispensation which can assure national unity and solve the problem of ethnicity. The whole issue is complicated by religious differences, and economic conditions are deteriorating further amidst accusations that Babangida's government has a poor record regarding human rights.

MILITARY DICTATORSHIPS AND THE CONSTRAINTS OF POVERTY

Liberia The coups in Egypt and Libya were the result of the commonly held view that the monarchies were incompetent and too selfish to introduce the modernisation needed to ensure that the ordinary people shared in the country's wealth. The coups that occurred in Liberia and Ethiopia – the two African states that survived the partition – had the same cause. Liberia was a republic from its very existence, but after 1878 the government was manipulated so that power remained in the hands of the Afro-American True Whig Party. Control by this party thus became almost hereditary. During his reign from 1941 to 1971 President William Tubman tried to involve the indigenous population in the government, but his successor, William Tolbert, failed to adapt to the demands and criticism of radicals, who were becoming acutely aware of developments elsewhere in Africa. Dissatisfaction spread to the ranks of the non-commissioned

officers, and during 1980 'a quant-faced master-sergeant [Samuel Doe] ... led a band of junior soldiers into the executive mansion, killing President Tolbert in his bedroom and later publicly executing 13 senior members of his cabinet'.⁴⁴

Doe's regime Doe established a People's Redemption Council, but dissatisfaction continued and eight unsuccessful coup attempts took place in the following eight years. As economic and financial conditions deteriorated, Doe tried to use techniques of subjection and reconciliation in his style of government. By 1989 all of Doe's associates in the 1980 coup had died under dubious circumstances, and the IMF halted all aid because of the non-payment of debts and rank corruption, of which Doe himself was suspected. The United States government continued to support his regime until disturbances led by Charles Taylor, 'a man of uncertain moral standing',⁴⁵ broke out in November 1989 and soon spread throughout the country. The unrest reached Monrovia and widespread atrocities, often committed along ethnic lines, occurred there before the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) intervened by sending a monitoring group to try to end hostilities and introduce an interim government. A multinational military force followed in August 1990 and attempted to impose a ceasefire. Taylor was opposed to this because he suspected it was a Nigerian effort to rob him of his victory and to save Doe. After Doe had been killed outside the headquarters of the monitoring group, his successors and a third group that had split from Taylor agreed to Ecowas's presence in the country. A truce was signed and an interim government was introduced to solve the crisis. Ecowas was left in financial difficulties because it had to fund the military task force and the monitoring group.

Ethiopia Until 1974 Ethiopia had one of the oldest monarchies in the world and, with the exception of the years when Fascist Italy had occupied the country (between 1936 and 1941), Haile Selassie had remained in power from 1918. He was aware that feudal Ethiopia was in need of some modernisation and introduced this by means of education and training. In the 1960s and 1970s he experienced difficulties. His attempt to incorporate Eritrea as a province of Ethiopia in 1962 sparked the resistance of the Eritrean Liberation Front and armed conflict erupted in the Ogaden, a region appropriated by Menelik during the partition. The Somali pastoralists had always resented Ethiopian efforts to control their pasture lands. To add to the difficulties, the dry northern parts of Ethiopia began to experience a drought from 1972–1973 and this resulted in famine. Haile Selassie, unwilling to share power and responsibility with the young generation which his modernisation programme had created, failed to solve these problems. From the mid-sixties, resistance to his rule increased among students and workers and by 1974 it spread to the army; young officers executed a coup in which Haile Selassie lost his life and an Armed Forces Co-ordinating Committee seized power. It suspended parliament, abolished the constitution and appointed a Provisional Military Administrative Council known as the Derg. A three-year-long power struggle started between various groups in the Derg, each with its own socialist ideology and armed factions, and many people died in the fighting before Major Mengistu Haile Mariam emerged as leader in 1977.

Unitary state Ethiopia became a republic and while parts of the country experienced a new drought from 1984, the new Worker's Party of Ethiopia, the country's only political party, undertook to compile a constitution. It declared that Ethiopia was a unitary state governed by an elected national assembly. The provinces became autonomous regions. There was resistance in the regions, however, and this increased as liberation movements, most of them Marxist-oriented, rose against Mariam's rule. In 1987 some of these factions considered joining hands against the government, and yet another severe famine hit the country. The government stuck to strict Marxist-Leninist policies and these hampered the famine-relief programmes.

Despite the peace Mariam concluded with Somalia over Ogaden in 1987, the military situation deteriorated. Mariam faced defeat in the civil wars that threatened his regime and internal dissension grew as the famine increased. In May 1989 Mariam averted a coup attempt and declared his willingness to start unconditional peace talks. Soon afterwards he changed his mind and ruled out all possibility of Eritrean independence. More military setbacks followed, and in January 1990 Ethiopia lost control of Massawa, its only outlet to the sea. Mariam abandoned his fourteen-year-long commitment to Marxism-Leninism and began talks with the Eritreans about the reopening of Massawa. Eventually an agreement was reached in December 1990 which allowed food relief to reach both the Ethiopians and the Eritrean rebels – something Mariam had prevented until then. This could not save Mariam, and his military regime was toppled in May 1991. His army was disbanded and the various opposition groups embarked upon efforts to build a democratic state.

AFRICA'S DIVINE PRESIDENTS

Sekou Touré Irrespective of the way in which a number of Africa's leaders came to power, many of them, both civilian and military, adopted the role of divine monarch, presenting themselves as 'fathers of the nation from whom flowed all goodness'.⁴⁶ It was often the role of their assistants to serve their leaders' personal needs to the exclusion of the interests of the state or the country. Some presidents, like Sekou Touré and Julius Nyerere, were very successful in their quest for personal ascendancy, irrespective of their political philosophy. Touré remained in power till his death in 1984, and Nyerere retired in 1986. Touré, a committed Marxist, did not hesitate to use violence against those who, because of party differences or poor living conditions, tried to overthrow his Stalinist dictatorship. Guinea's dependence on Western industrial countries for the sale of its iron ore gradually forced Touré to change some of these attitudes.

Julius Nyerere Nyerere was the great exponent of African socialism. This resulted in his avoidance of industrial development and urbanisation in order to promote 'ujamaa' or socialist agriculture. 'Ujamaa', which he defined in the Arusha Declaration in 1967, entailed the building of small villages based on communal land ownership and promoted agriculture that aimed at self-sufficiency as the basis for nation-building. This fell short in providing a specific direction for the country's economy, causing misunderstanding and often unhappy results. In 1972 only one fifth of Tanzania's population lived in such villages and only 8 per cent of the people had switched to communal farming. The

voluntary aspect of the scheme lost its momentum, and Tanu officials began to enforce the policy. In 'Operation Tanzania', which began in 1977, more than 13 million people were forced into family villages. While Tanzania's population doubled during Nyerere's one-party regime, the country's GNP dropped to a mere \$200 per head in 1980 (which was worse than that of Guinea), while the foreign debts of both these countries increased sharply in the 1970s.

Senghor Until his retirement in 1980 the Senegalese president, Léopold Senghor, was not reticent to talk about socialism, but in reality his country was closely related to France and to the powers that had invested money in Senegal since the colonial days. Senghor saw no reason to discontinue ties with France; after all, he was an important exponent of French culture. France remained a significant political, economic and strategic influence in Senegal. Senghor maintained a fine political balance in a country that had lost its significance as federal capital when French West Africa became independent; its economy stagnated and its GNP went into decline from about the 1980s.

Kaunda There is an important similarity between Senegal and Zambia, the Central African country, in the sense that Zambia, too, relied heavily upon the West, the biggest investor in its copper industry. From the early seventies Zambia ran into serious economic difficulties as the copper price dropped. Added to this, the landlocked country suffered when political instability in neighbouring countries severed important links with the sea. These difficulties were exacerbated by drought and food shortages. Zambia became a one-party state in 1972 and adopted a policy of 'humanism', a kind of socialism formulated by President Kenneth Kaunda which is very similar to Tanzania's 'ujamaa'.

Malawi Some African countries opted for a capitalist economic system, and small, landlocked Malawi was one of them. Very poor and with few natural resources, Malawi, despite the commercial boycott the OAU and many African states introduced against South Africa, openly traded with that country and supplied many labourers for South Africa's mines, as in the days before independence. As time passed, the attitude of Malawi's autocratic president hardened, and he turned down demands for egalitarianism and more rapid Africanisation. By 1970 his government was among the most conservative on the continent, but its economy was strong enough to withstand the economic recession. In 1971 Banda declared himself life president of the country.

Kenya Jomo Kenyatta, who governed Kenya between 1964 and his death in 1978, inherited a country where the European and Asian settlers laid the foundation for industrial development. He was adamant that the benefit of this prosperity should be used for the modernisation of the country, but his successor, Daniel arap Moi, failed to maintain this policy. One of the reasons for his failure was the steep increase in the population, which had risen to more than 20 million by the early 1980s.

Houphouët-Boigny Félix Houphouët-Boigny turned the Côte d'Ivoire into the richest non-oil-producing country in black Africa during the 1970s. This was a result of his policy of encouraging Western entrepreneurs to develop the country's natural resources: cocoa, coffee and timber. Development in the Côte d'Ivoire overshadowed that of Ghana, but the benefits of the Ivorian economic miracle did not reach the peasants, who made up the majority

of the country's population. Instead cities such as Abidjan, with a substantial white population, prospered, and when the world trade recession set in, prices fell. Drought also forced down production, and the country ended up with the highest foreign debt in Africa, which meant that in 1984 they had to apply to the IMF for a rescheduling of this debt. The question arises: was the price for the Côte d'Ivoire's spectacular growth not too high if only the investors and the urban population reaped the profits?

THE MOVE TOWARDS REDEMOCRATISATION

New dispensation In the late 1980s there was a powerful movement to reintroduce democracy. Throughout black Africa this was supported by mass demonstrations which favoured a new political dispensation. In this changing political atmosphere, the benevolent one-party rule of leaders such as Kaunda and Houphouët-Boigny and the military regimes both came under pressure. Demands to replace both regimes with executive authorities accountable to elected legislatures were made under democratic banners. The economic decay of Africa was at the heart of many of these demands, and progress was often shored up by Western powers who donated money. The French president, François Mitterand, hinted at this at the 16th Franco-African summit in June 1990 when he said: 'no democracy without development; no development without democracy.'⁴⁷

Economic decline The dramatic crumbling of the Marxist-Leninist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union undoubtedly had a major psychological effect on Africa, a continent which not only was at a political dead-end, but was economically bankrupt. Despite the variety of ideological and developmental options that were offered to Africa over the years, the continent was progressively marginalised in the economic sphere, to such an extent that its GNP was less than that of Belgium, a small country whose population is a mere 2 per cent of that of Africa. Africa became incapable of holding a significant share in the world economy or even increasing the existing share; there was also economic backwardness in the sense that Africa even failed to maintain domestic services on a basis that made it possible to cope with the demands of the future.⁴⁸

Youth's new expectations In the thirty years after independence, Africa's population grew rapidly: in countries such as Kenya it increased by 300 per cent. Urbanisation increased at a similar rate in countries such as Gabon and the Central African Republic. Educational programmes resulted in a much larger pool of educated young people with new expectations – people who were well aware of development elsewhere in the world. They had little respect for those leaders who took control in the first decades after independence and instead formed sophisticated pressure groups with strong foreign links.

Decline of Marxism-Leninism These conditions meshed with the new international order which was the result of the demise of Marxism-Leninism. The bipolar world and the East-West struggle which had characterised the international scene since 1945 disappeared. In the process Africa was relegated to the position of 'irrelevant international clutter'.⁴⁹ Soviet military and fiscal aid disappeared overnight, and with it went the endemic internal civil conflict that plagued states such as Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia. As Marxism crumbled, the West withdrew from the Third World and the control of certain mineral supplies or

regions (which from the outset had been strategically questionable) lost its urgency. The Eastern European experience and the advantages held out by the European Economic Community for the future have replaced all former Western European interest in Africa. The IMF, which had struggled in vain to help about 30 African countries onto the road towards economic recovery, was completely exasperated with the way in which some of the leaders had behaved. Many had shown themselves to be much more interested in staying in power than in solving their economic problems. The emphasis swung instead to demands that there be better government, less wastage and corruption, more respect for human rights, and a return to a market economy.

French attitude to Africa France led the way in the new approach towards Africa. During the Cold War France had often shielded African states from the demands of the IMF and other world powers,⁵⁰ but when this struggle ended it associated with the IMF and the United States and demanded basic democratic reforms in exchange for continued fiscal aid. France renounced unilaterally any future military involvement in the continent.

Benin Several African leaders reacted in utter disbelief. One francophone leader who tried to escape the reckoning was the ruler of Benin for 17 years, the iron-fisted dictator Mathieu Kerekou. The country is endowed with weak natural resources and, added to this, a bitter rivalry had developed among the people: those in the north were sharply divided from the southerners, who enjoyed a reasonable education. After four coups, Kerekou took power in 1972 and changed the country's name from Dahomey to Benin to suit his style of government and ideology. After sixteen years the country was insolvent and on its knees economically; striking civil servants had not been paid for more than a year. France suggested that Kerekou should step down and that a one-party system similar to the one in the Côte d'Ivoire be introduced. Beninians refused to accept this, and opted for full freedom and democracy. Kerekou was denied a meaningful role in the reform process and in the subsequent presidential election only the electors of his own northern region voted for him.

Côte d'Ivoire When France suggested the introduction of the type of system applied in the Côte d'Ivoire, Ivorian demonstrators in Abidjan rejected the idea. Houphouët-Boigny immediately applied his political finesse by agreeing unreservedly to the demand for multi-party politics and elections for a legislature and a president. By putting the reforms speedily into effect, Houphouët-Boigny caught the opposition on the wrong foot, and when the 26 parties that emerged requested a postponement of the elections, Houphouët-Boigny turned their very arguments against them, saying that the country was impatient to have the elections. The result was a resounding victory for Houphouët-Boigny's Parti démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) while his challenger for the presidency managed to gain only 18.3 per cent of the votes. Gabon experienced a similar metamorphosis, and in an existing democracy such as Senegal, the president invited opposition members to join his cabinet. Others, like the Mali military leader, Moussa Traore, and Zaïre's Mobutu Sese Seko, realised full well that the reforms which were being demanded foreshadowed their political demise. Traore was eventually ousted by his own military, while Mobutu managed to survive until 1993 despite a great deal of internal turmoil in his country.

Zambia Anglophone Africa is not pressurised by London to the same extent as its cousins in francophone Africa. Some leaders tried to ride out the storm, and in Zambia Kaunda saw no relevance for Africa in the events in Eastern Europe. As late as 1990 he argued that 'the circumstances which made us rally behind the one-party system have not changed ... what we have been doing ever since our hard-won independence Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are starting to do only now'.⁵¹ Anglophone Africa held the view that the reforms demanded were possible only through authoritarian policies. In Zambia, Kenya, Malawi, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe the rulers were struggling desperately to remain in power. For Kaunda the writing appeared on the wall in 1987. He tried several political tricks to save face, but urban unrest eventually forced him to yield partially to demands set by the Movement for a Multiparty Democracy. He appointed a commission to prepare the constitution for a plebiscite, but more demonstrations followed before Kaunda finally bowed to the demands and in 1991 he was ousted from power in a general election.

Effect of economic realities Africa's new democratic charter aims at a new dispensation – constitutionally entrenched and guaranteed political life, human and civic freedom, and political accountability with broadly defined market economies. Ironically, an economic revolution is not in the offing as an automatic result of the political changes. This is clearly borne out by the experience of the Côte d'Ivoire where the political changes did not open the way for an economic rebirth. No new capital has materialised (indeed, the outflow has reached new proportions) and many of Abidjan's French residents have left the country. The Côte d'Ivoire remains insolvent despite severe austerity measures and considered defaulting on its debts in mid-1991. Some of Africa's new leaders are acutely aware of the continent's plight – as Zambia's new president, Frederick Chiluba, told Zambians in his first speech in the country's parliament.⁵² In fact, Africa's debts have become one of the main considerations to which the OAU, as will be seen, has turned its attention.

Notes

- 1 J. U. J. Asiegbu, *Nigeria and its British invaders, 1851–1920*, p. xdx.
- 2 R. B. Collier, *Regimes in tropical Africa: Changing forms of supremacy*, chapter 6, as quoted in P. Duignan & R. H. Jackson, *Politics and government in African states, 1960–1985*, p. 26.
- 3 A. M. Kirk-Greene, 'West Africa: Nigeria and Ghana', in Duignan & Jackson, *Politics and government*, p. 72.
- 4 J. F. A. Ajayi, 'Colonialism: An episode in African history', in L. H. Gann & P. Duignan (eds), *Colonialism in Africa 1870–1960*, vol. 1: *The history and politics of colonialism, 1870–1914*, p. 496.
- 5 R. Oliver & A. Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, pp. 315–317.
- 6 *Africa south of the Sahara, 1976–77*, p. 17.
- 7 A. A. Mazrui & M. Tidy, *Nationalism and the new states in Africa*, p. 32.
- 8 D. K. Fieldhouse, *Black Africa, 1945–80: Economic decolonization and arrested development*, p. 71.
- 9 Mazrui & Tidy, *Nationalism and the new states*, p. 326.

- 10 P. Duignan & R. H. Jackson, *Politics and government in African states, 1960–1985*, p. 12.
- 11 Oliver & Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 330.
- 12 *Africa south of the Sahara, 1976–77*, p. 22.
- 13 Duignan & Jackson, *Politics and government*, p. 8–9.
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 9 and 20, and E. Isichei, *A history of Nigeria*, p. 471.
- 15 R. Oliver & J. D. Fage, *A short history of Africa*, p. 242.
- 16 Duignan & Jackson, *Politics and government*, p. 26.
- 17 Mazrui & Tidy, *Nationalism and the new states*, p. 326.
- 18 *Africa south of the Sahara, 1976–77*, p. 17.
- 19 Oliver & Fage, *A short history of Africa*, pp. 237–238.
- 20 *Ibid.*, pp. 244–245.
- 21 Duignan & Jackson, *Politics and government*, p. 19.
- 22 Oliver & Fage, *A short history of Africa*, p. 244, and H. V. Hodson (ed.), *The annual register: A record of world events, 1987*, p. 273.
- 23 R. Hodder-Williams, *An introduction to the politics of tropical Africa*, p. 113.
- 24 *Africa south of the Sahara, 1976–77*, p. 18.
- 25 *Africa south of the Sahara, 1990*, p. 1058.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 Oliver & Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 324, and Hodder-Williams, *An introduction to the politics*, p. 147.
- 28 Quoted in Oliver & Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 323. See also Hodder-Williams, *An introduction*, p. 113.
- 29 Oliver & Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, p. 324, and Hodder-Williams, *An introduction*, p. 127.
- 30 Africa Institute of South Africa, *Africa at a glance, 1992*, pp. 50–51.
- 31 Duignan & Jackson, *Politics and government*, pp. 21–22, and Oliver & Fage, *A short history of Africa*, p. 247.
- 32 Hodder-Williams, *An introduction*, p. 128.
- 33 D. Birmingham, *Kwame Nkrumah*, p. 75.
- 34 A. M. Kirk-Greene, 'West Africa: Nigeria and Ghana', in Duignan and Jackson, *Politics and government*, p. 33.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- 36 Fage, *A history of Africa*, p. 516.
- 37 E. Serpa, 'The rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the future of North Africa', in *Africa Insight*, 22(3), 1992, p. 188.
- 38 Hodder-Williams, *An introduction*, p. 126.

- 39 *Africa south of the Sahara*, 1990, p. 763.
- 40 Isichei, *A history of Nigeria*, p. 469.
- 41 *Africa south of the Sahara*, 1990, p. 769.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 770.
- 43 A. J. Day (ed.), *The annual register 1990: A record of world events 1990*, p. 259.
- 44 *Africa Report*, November/December 1991, p. 14.
- 45 Day, *The annual register 1990*, p. 264.
- 46 Fage, *A history of Africa*, p. 524.
- 47 Day, *The annual register 1990*, p. 422.
- 48 S. Decalo, 'Back to square one: The redemocratization of Africa', *Africa Insight*, 21(3), 1991, p. 154.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 155.
- 50 *Ibid.*, and T. Chafer, 'French African policy: Towards change', *African Affairs*, 91(362), January 1992, pp. 45 and 51.
- 51 *Zambia Daily Mail*, 9 and 15 March 1990, as quoted by Decalo, 'Back to square one', p. 157.
- 52 *Beeld*, 31 December 1991.