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Independence of Africa

LIFE AS PART OF A COLONY

Some European powers like the British used indirect rule. They appointed local chiefs to be their enforcers, to collect taxes, run the businesses the British wanted, and put down any trouble that began to emerge. Africans were lured into jobs with promises of wealth, power, and influence. The French took a more direct approach, encouraging Africans to become French citizens, a policy of assimilation. The French forced those they had conquered to give up their own customs and adopt French ways. Many people in African colonies controlled by France began speaking French and several applied for and were granted French citizenship.

AFTER WORLD WAR II

Though they worked to keep order in their African colonies, few European powers did not do much to improve the lives of the Africans themselves, unless doing so would increase profits. This neglect remained largely the rule until after World War II. By the 1950s however change was in the air. Many Africans were openly opposed to continued European control of their countries. They realized that colonialism was not equality for all. The European powers had more rights and more comfortable lives than their African subjects. They were taking advantage of African land and labor, and they saw the African people as second-class citizens. World Wars I and II had opened Africa to the rest of the world. They had fought on the side of the Europeans, and they now began to demand freedom for themselves.

Slowly the European powers began to liberate their African colonies. By 1960, there were 27 independent African countries. By 1975, over 47 were independent. Even so, independence came at a high cost. When European countries established their African colonies, they paid little attention to the traditional loyalties and kinship groups of the people they were ruling. Boundaries between colonies were decided according to colonial practice rather than what made sense in terms of the different groups who lived in the areas being divided. These new boundaries often followed old colonial boundaries, with little concern for the ethnic and religious groups that lived there.

Pan-Africanism

While African nations suffered the tragedies of war, there were also powerful unifying forces at work. A movement called Pan-Africanism spread across the globe during the 20th century. Pan-Africanism is the idea that there is a global African community made up of native Africans and the descendants of African slaves and migrants across the world. The Pan-African movement called for unity among all black people.

The origins of the Pan-African movement can be traced back to the early 19th century when black intellectuals called for self-governance. The Pan-African movement was important to the development of the African Union because it rallied African nations to work together.

South Africa

The colony of South Africa was founded in the mid-1600s by the Dutch from the Netherlands, who used the colony for trade around the tip of the African continent. Many Dutch settlers came there, and they were eventually called the Boers. They had little to do with the native Africans, other than to consider them as servants or working people. When the British took over the colony in the early 1800s, many of the descendants of the Dutch settlers moved north into land occupied by the native Zulus. This move led to warfare with the Zulus, a tribe that later fought the British as well. The Dutch descendants set up two new states in South Africa, Transvaal and Orange Free State. In the early 1900s, these states were eventually merged with British South Africa to form the Union of South Africa, a state that by this time had discovered vast deposits of gold and diamonds. Because native Africans were considered second-class citizens in the Union of South Africa, they formed the African National Congress (ANC) to work for equal treatment of the nonwhite population.

South Africa set up a strict system of separation of the races, the apartheid system. The African National Congress worked for many years to end this system, eventually getting the international community to help by imposing embargos on the Union of South Africa. An embargo meant countries

refused to trade with the Union of South Africa until they changed their discriminatory policies. By 1985, pressure from the embargo and continuing resistance led by the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress forced the South African government to begin making changes. Apartheid began to come apart, and in 1994 South Africa held its first multiracial elections and chose Nelson Mandela as the country's first black president.

KENYA

Kenya became independent of British rule in 1964, under the leadership of Joseph Kenyatta, a leader of the Kenyan African National Union (KNAU). While Kenya was glad to be free of British rule, the government of Kenyatta was not open or free. Under Kenyatta and his successor, Daniel arap Moi, the KNAU ran almost unopposed in every national election until the 1990s. At that time, the international community told Moi that unless Kenya improved their civil rights record, economic assistance from abroad would be cut off. There has been some improvement in the political rights of Kenya's people, but more is needed. Some argue that a western style democracy does not fit Kenya's past or traditions. The country remains a multi-party state on the books, but the reality is that the KNAU still controls much of the government.

NIGERIA

Nigeria gained independence from Britain in 1960, and most people expected the new state to be stable and calm. Within a few months, however war broke out between the Christian south and the Muslim north. The religious war left many thousands dead or injured. The country tried to reorganize as 12 different regions, even the oil-rich province in the eastern part of the country declared itself to be the Independent State of Biafra.

Military coups and outbreaks of violence marked the years that followed. Elections were held in 1999 that seemed more free and open than what had gone before, but the government still remains unstable.

Nigeria has the potential to have great wealth from their oil supplies. However because of corruption in the government this resource has not been developed. As a result, Nigeria must rely on foreign aid and foreign supplies for their people.

Respond:

1. What is indirect rule?
2. What is assimilation?
3. How is colonialism not equal for all?
4. How were the boundaries made for the new colonial countries?
5. What is Pan-Africanism?
6. Who are the Boers?
7. Who are the Zulus?
8. What is the African National Congress?
9. What is Apartheid?
10. Who is Nelson Mandela?
11. What is KNAU?
12. What keeps Nigeria from becoming a rich nation?

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African Independence Timeline

Using your notes in class and the reading about African Independence complete the list of events and create a timeline on the back side of this sheet. Some dates, events and pages have been given for you.

Date	Nation Impacted or Event	Describe the Event
1950's	After World War II	Many Africans were opposed to European rule.
1960		
1975		
20 th Century		
19 th Century		
Mid 1600's		
1800's		
1985		
1994		
1964		
1990's		
1960		
1999		

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