

The Transformation to Independence

- ⇒ Between 1957 and the 1970s, the colonial era drew to a close. Belgium left the Congo in 1961, and Portugal gave up its colonies in the mid-1970s. Only southern Rhodesia and South Africa remained under white rule, although independent of European imperial powers.
- ⇒ Gaining freedom proved deceptively easy. Governing independent states proved a far greater challenge. Most of the new states were poor and their peoples lacked political experience. Many faced periods of civil war between different tribal and language groups.
- ⇒ For sub-Saharan Africa, the decades of independence saw success in maintaining national unity, but the early attempts to create democracies gave way to authoritarian regimes. The African past offered few bases for liberal democracy, while authoritarianism came naturally to military leaders. The policies of these African leaders varied greatly. Ugandan dictators engaged in brutal terror; Ethiopia experimented with Marxism; others, like Tanzania, pursued non-Marxist agrarian socialism; some rulers assumed notions of divine kingship. In the 1990s, several states turned to democracy again.
- ⇒ Attempts to promote economic development also remained unsuccessful.

The Setting / Challenges of Nation-Building

- ⇒ Deep divisions between ethnic and religious groups remained when European rulers disappeared from their former colonies.
- ⇒ Economic life was hampered by concessions made to the departing colonizers and by an international economy that favored industrialized nations.
- ⇒ They lacked technological and management expertise, and had to face steady population growth and environmental degradation.
- ⇒ Social unrest occurred due to corruption, and breakdowns in traditional culture.
- ⇒ Failure to solve the problems produced dissent and disturbances that shook existing regimes. Opponents included political and religious revivalist groups with widely different proposed solutions.
- ⇒ Leaders adopted differing strategies to remain in power, but many were replaced by military officers who assumed dictatorial authority.
- ⇒ Successful nationalistic movements usually involved mass mobilization of peasants and urban workers drawn into national political life for the first time. Nationalist leaders promised an improved life once the Europeans departed.
- ⇒ When lack of resources blocked fulfillment of expectations, quarrels erupted among rival leaders, classes, and ethnic groups. The resulting instability further hampered development and deflected attention from the real problems hindering progress.

Artificial Nations and the Rising Tide of Communal Strife

- ⇒ Internal strife and the collapse of political systems have been common in the new African (and Asian) states. One reaction in the West is to assert that former colonial peoples are unfit to rule themselves and that many were better off under European rule. Others called for active intervention by the West (and Japan). The responses do not give enough attention to the immense obstacles confronting the new nations, or to the harmful legacies of colonial rule.
- ⇒ Western societies in the past also had to overcome disruptive social and political divisions.
- ⇒ Nearly all new Asian and African states were artificially created by Europeans who gave minimal attention to the interests of the peoples involved. The imposed boundaries incorporated often very hostile ethnic and religious groups.
- ⇒ The colonial rulers maintained power by divide-and-rule tactics.
- ⇒ When the colonial era ended, the rulers left resolution of long-existing problems to new regimes unable to contain them.
- ⇒ Internal strife and war between states resulted, and democratic regimes suffered.

- ⇒ Economic improvement was hampered by military spending, while hostilities caused extensive human suffering.
- ⇒ Whatever the source of blame for lack of post-independence development, leaders of new nations had to deliver on at least some of their promises if they were to continue in power.
- ⇒ Different general efforts have achieved some success, but the majority of the population rarely has benefited. Often new problems arise from partially successful endeavors.

Charismatic Populists and One-Party Rule

- ⇒ One of the least successful responses was the development of authoritarian rule under a charismatic leader. Example - Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana:
 - Internal rivals hampered initiatives, while Nkrumah's turning to the Soviet bloc and its
 - During the 1960s he forcibly crushed all opposition groups and took dictatorial powers.
 - As the economy foundered opposition increased; Nkrumah was deposed in 1966 and

Military Responses: Dictatorships and Revolutions

- ⇒ The military often is one of the few societal groups resistant to ethnic and religious divisions, and it has the near monopoly of force. Soldiers may have the technical training lacking among civilian leaders.
- ⇒ When military men were anticommunist, they gained Western assistance.
- ⇒ Once in power many military men established repressive and corrupt regimes where limited resources were used to protect their authority.
- ⇒ Some leaders attacked neighbors to divert attention from their failures.
- ⇒ A few military men were different and attempted radical reform.

South Africa: The Apartheid State and Its Demise

- ⇒ By the 1970s South Africa's majority African population remained under the rule of the country's European-ancestry population. Afrikaner domination had been secured through victory in elections - Africans could not vote - of their Nationalist Party in 1948.
- ⇒ A vast system of laws was passed to create *apartheid*, a system designed to ensure white domination of political power and economic resources. All aspects of living were segregated. Special homelands were formed for the main "tribal" groups, thus leaving whites with most of the richest, productive land. The overpopulated homelands were reservoirs of cheap labor for white industry and agriculture. A brutal regime was enforced the system. All forms of African protest were illegal. Leaders were imprisoned, tortured, or killed.
- ⇒ Africans turned to guerrilla resistance during the 1960s without much immediate success.
- ⇒ By the 1980s the state system began cracking because of internal and external economic and political pressures. Moderate Afrikaners led by F.W. De Klerk began dismantling *apartheid*.
- ⇒ The release of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela in 1990 signaled the end of the old order. All South Africans voted for a new government in 1994, under Mandela, to begin building a new multiracial nation with equal opportunities for all citizens.