

# Development of independence from colonialism



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Ghana was the first country in black Africa to achieve independence, on March 6, 1957. It showed the way to the rest of Africa to free themselves from the colonization which was spread everywhere on the continent.

Kwame Nkrumah was the one who inspired by India's independence came out with the Convention People's Party (CPP) and brought imperial Britain to leave the Gold Coast (Ghana before the independence) only thanks to political means.

After this victory, Kwame Nkrumah became the symbol of a generation as the anti-colonialist struggle, recognized by the most as the first real African activist victorious over the colonialism. The independence of Gold Coast had a magnitude all over the continent and was at the basis of the many nationalist actions realized afterward.

After the independence of Ghana : No one doubted about the bright economic future of Ghana as it is the first cocoa exporter worldwide and was producing big quantity of gold (about one tenth of the world's production). Ghana was also full with crops, forests and even gemstones. Finally, many in Ghana were well-educated and a quarter of Ghana 's population was literate.

Besides, Nkrumah was becoming more and more appreciated by people thanks to the inspiration he provided to them. He got the heavy responsibility of rebuilding again this country, to unit its habitants although they shared very few things in common and still, the colonization ended up recently.

Indeed, in this year, many groups still remain hostiles toward each other from the hundreds of years of wars and of slave trade. Tensions were still present as Ghana was trying to change its face. The country wasn't stable yet, the population could have been influenced by others therefore Nkrumah decided that all the political parties whether regional or tribal oriented were forbidden in order to prevent any internal problems caused by feelings of nationalism.

1958 was a dark year for Ghana which was no longer the world's largest cocoa supplier. Unfortunately, the country was facing an economic downturn which created a social crisis.

Nkrumah's government lost its popularity toward the mass and the rural population.

The government's response makes the situation even worse: Indeed, Nkrumah became dictatorial and took many hard measures against the manifestations and to anyone who disliked his government. While, he said once:

*“ If we get self-government, we will transform the Gold Coast ( Ghana ) into a paradise in 10 years” [1]*

Strikes were considered illegal and severely punished. He implemented of a law which without trial allowed to arrest anyone suspected being against the state for five years which turned to be ten years later on.

All political parties were prohibited. As a result:

Nkrumah declared himself president for life; Ghana as a one-party state and finally achieved to turn his country as hell on earth for Ghana 's workers.

In 1960, Nkrumah is designated president of republic. The president had high expectancy for Ghana and started many expensive and ambitious projects without unfortunately getting profit from them.

As a matter of fact, Nkrumah wanted to use the resources of Ghana to promote the industry development and the economic growth for the country. Ghana had a lot of bauxite and that could assure a good rise of the sector especially thanks to the manufacture of aluminum, by exporting worldwide. However to start these projects, the need for electricity became a necessity.

As a consequence, the process of industrialization began, leading to the Volta Dam project. The project was only half successful as many others Nkrumah had run but nobody could doubt the good intentions behind them.

The agricultural sector remained unheeded whereas it represents the basis for a developing country and overall for Ghana as it disposes of a lot of natural resources. As a consequence, the economy started to turn bad and Ghana contracted a debt which was increasing highly. The positive mood in the recent past years which tend to stay confident in Ghana 's development ended and provoked a big change in the political climate. Later on, in 1962, the economic situation evolved so badly that all foreign investors and industry were in the obligation by law to invest again more than 60 percent of their gains within Ghana . The president had no choice than to force his investors as he did with the population to continue providing money to its system that no one else believed in any more.

As if the fall was endless, in 1964, one year after W. E. B died; (he was the first African American who graduated at Harvard and to earn a doctorate. He was also known as an activist against racism and the segregation. After the independence of Ghana , he was invited by Nkrumah to live in Ghana ); the president Nkrumah suspended the constitution and therefore the democracy. Ghana was finally officially recognized as a one-party state ruled by a dictator.

Again, the West reacted after realizing to what situation Ghana fell after the Independence . Criticised by western societies, Nkrumah began to work with communist countries such as principally the Soviet Union .

At that time, Ghana 's economics' crisis has reached its climax: The country is out of control and the people keep getting poorer. The dictator is totally unpopular because of its previous actions against his people. The economy is out of control and the population is getting poorer. Nkrumah is no longer a popular leader as he hits hard on demonstrations and arrests anyone in opposition.

#### The first coup

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of February, 1966: A military takeover occurred in Ghana, it didn't make any big losses as it was planned to happen while Nkrumah was away from the country visiting his friend President Sékou Touré in Guinea. The military coup was realized by British-trained officers who had the ambition to stop the hard rule of Nkrumah and his government. Therefore, while the president was away every of its statues in Accra were taken down by the people. The new military government called itself the National

Liberation Council (NLC). They declared that their intention was to fight off corruption and to make some change in the constitution so that Ghana could come back one more time to a democratic system. Unofficially, Britain was intervening in Ghana because of the orientation the country was undertaking during the last years of Nkrumah's dictatorship towards the communist countries. Indeed, it was the cold war, the world was divided in two and the tentatives to attract countries to one side or the other weren't rare; overall in these underdeveloped countries.

As a consequence, the NLC's council tended to be rather more conservative than socialist and therefore, it kept under a strict control all politicians and ideologues whether they were either socialists or communists. All connections to the Soviet Union were broken and technicians from USSR and China were expelled in order to get rid of any influences that could lead Ghana to communism.

Ghana was having his chance another time, to the eyes of the West, Ghana was taking a new way, a proper one to democracy and self-sustainability.

After three years of provisional leading: The NLC legalized another time the participation of multiples political parties. Finally, new elections were announced for September 1969 which marked the beginning of the second republic.

A new civilian government is created by Dr. Kofi Busia and the Progress Party. His party got a good start as the national economy regained strength thanks to the high prices on the cocoa market. Very quickly, prices drop again, the economic situation of Ghana go from bad to worst in 1971.

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Indeed, a political decision has been made to devalue the Cedi which led to higher prices and to demonstrations, conflicts with violence by the population.

In 1972, Kwame Nkrumah dies, despite his political failure, African masses still see in him a brave activist, the symbol of the struggle anti-colonialist and as the founder of Ghana .

On the 13th of January, 1972: Once again a coup occurred, realized by forces of the army, for a change of government. This time, The National Redemption Council decided to impose a leader for Ghana . So, they chose Colonel Ignatius Acheampong to rule the state. However, the head of the state doesn't have enough experience in any domains whether they are political or economical.

A lack of vision from Acheampong led to a rise of corruption from the basis to the top of the society and the government. As a consequence, big strikes are organised by the youth in the country to claim their disappointment toward the critical situation the country was conducted.

One year later, the economy was almost falling to pieces and no agreement could have been found with NRC-government. Acheampong took the initiative to put an end to the government and implemented the Supreme Military Council (SMC) constituted of a little group of seven persons chose by himself. The SMC ruled the country in a very roughly way: Any opposing to the regime was victim of multiples persecutions and even jailing without any sentence.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of July, 1978, Acheampong was in the obligation to resign while the general William Akuffo was taking the command of the “ Supreme Military Council II”. He engaged himself to reform a civilian government, to allow for another time the political parties in Ghana . Finally he declared that he would set a date for new elections.

Later on, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June in 1979, after a first failed coup in the same year, Jerry John Rawlings a flight Lieutenant planned a takeover some days before the planned election. He was finally victorious, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council achieved to take power. His ideas were principally inspired by socialism whether they are political or economical. His goal was to find an issue to corruption and the economical situation in which the country remained. Rawlings’ intention was to settle democratic elections but in a first time to stop the generals of the “ Supreme Military Council II” from running away wealthy whereas they turned the country in chaos.

Two weeks later, Dr. Hilla Limann leading the People’s National Party succeeded the election. As a result, the party got only 71 of the 140 seats in parliament making them a bit powerless to undertake decisions to free the country from the problems it faced until now. Rawlings understood that the PNP couldn’t rule properly Ghana as long as corruption, order and justice are not restored. In this sense, he strongly encouraged and helped the AFRC to put an end to all these problems before letting Ghana coming back to democracy.

Finally, in the same year, thanks to the AFRC, all the persons linked to the SMC government and who were accused of corruption was tried. As a result:



Hundreds of businessmen are sent to prison as well as government officials and the leader of this former government: Acheampong, Akuffo and Arifa were sentenced to death.

### The third republic

In September 1979, the AFRC gives power to Hilla Limann. Rawlings and his soldiers came back to the army. Unfortunately, this new government didn't help Ghana to solve its economical problems. During two years, the PNP have been trying but without any success: They haven't been able to leave the country from the economic stagnation. Indeed, many economic reforms haven't been applied or the government renounced to them in order to avoid a new takeover. Indeed, all economic changes proposed by the PNP's government presented hard terms for Ghana's people but they were declared as necessary for the rise of the country. In 1980, the corruption came back and brought many violent conflicts in the country which put a definitive end to the PNP's government.

At the end of 1981, on the 31st of December. Rawlings took again the command of Ghana thanks to the military, he took over the country. He formed the Provisional National Defence Council of which he became the chairman. This time, Rawlings established that the country would be a one-party state for a temporary time, to make of Ghana a stable country and to ensure in the long-run a real democracy.