

Why did Britain and France get out of Africa between 1957-1965

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Why did Britain and France get out of Africa between 1957-1965? Britain and France were among the main colonial powers with the largest number of colonies in Africa and around the world. The period between 1957 to 1965 saw the liberation of African colonies by Britain and France. Interplay of various factors forced these colonial masters to abandon their colonies by granting them the freedom to rule themselves (Mungazi 1996, p. 13).

Firstly, colonies became too expensive to maintain. This was because of the enormous expenses incurred by Britain and France during the World Wars. Both countries suffered extensive damage to their properties, and many of their citizens were casualties of the war (Mungazi 1996, p. 56). They, therefore, had to redirect most of their finances in rebuilding their cities; hence, they could not afford to sustain the manpower they had deployed to run the colonies. From an economical point of view, the colonies did not generate enough income to sustain themselves; therefore, it was uneconomical for the two countries to retain them.

Secondly the rise of nationalism and nationalists helped to speed up the evacuation process. Countries like Ghana, found in West Africa had extremely powerful nationalists who fought for the liberation of their country, for example, Kwame Nkrumah. Among his achievements, he helped to unite African countries through the establishment of Pan-African Union.

Nationalists from different countries were able to meet during these forums, whereby they discussed their grievances and formulated plans to forcefully evict their oppressors. The liberated countries also provided military support to other African countries which opted to evict their colonial masters.

However, these countries only resorted to the use of violence because

peaceful negotiations had failed (Mungazi 1996, p. 113).

Thirdly, international pressure from other countries, which did not have colonial possessions also helped to speed up the evacuation process. The formation of United Nations after the second World War united most countries and brought about the rise of the veto states. These states had the final say in most things affecting the United Nations. Among these countries was the USA, which used to be Britain's colonial possession before gaining independence in 1776. This would explain why USA was a forerunner in the fight against colonialism. Britain and France faced a lot of opposition from USA which lobbied the support of China and Russia when making veto decisions. This constant opposition affected France and Britain and undercut their advancement strategies. They, therefore, opted to abandon their colonies for their self-advancement (Mungazi 1996, p. 73).

In conclusion, Britain and France chose to evacuate their African colonies because they ceased to meet all the demands that attracted colonialists to inhabit them in the first place. Initially, colonies provided cheap labor, unlimited natural resources, and an unlimited supply of African natives to meet the high demand of slave labor. Therefore, when the British and French could no longer rely on the income generated from selling slaves after the abolishment of the slave trade, the colonies lost their appeal. This marked the starting point of the loss of interest in African colonies for the French and British. Together with a variety of other factors, evacuation of African colonies proved wise for both Britain and France (Mungazi 1996, p. 200).

Bibliography

Mungazi, D. A., 1996, *The Mind of Black Africa*, Johannesburg: ABC-CLIO.

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