

Using colonialism to stop it's own problems: a future for africa

[Government](#), [Colonialism](#)



Using Colonialism to Stop it's Own Problems: A Future for Africa Since the 19th century when colonialism began to sweep throughout the African continent, European nations have been the scapegoats for Africa's economic, political, and social issues. In Paul Johnson's article, "Colonialism's Back-and-Not a Moment Too Soon", we see that the present-day generation in Africa has grown to believe that colonialism is "inherently evil", due to many historical realities. In Wangari Maathai's *The Challenge For Africa*, our eyes are opened to the multitude of issues that Africa faces everyday, many of which stemmed from nineteenth century colonialism itself. But, the inhabitants of Africa have yet to recognize the severity and consequences of the problems they have. These issues did in fact root from colonialism but the expansion of these problems comes from the African people themselves. It is true that Africa has a multitude of social and economic problems but, there is a definite way to fix them and to stop them from growing. Africans have been battling against colonialism since the nineteenth century. Samori Tuore fought against French expansion in the Western Sudan for years until he was eventually defeated. Lobengula was tricked into allowing the British into present day Zimbabwe, and they eventually took over his land. But, it wasn't until The Berlin Conference in 1884 that truly sparked a turning point for African colonization. Countries like Great Britain, France, Portugal, Italy, and Germany began to expand their dominant reigns across the entire continent. However, instead of colonizing for the good of the people, they instead took over African land to solely benefit themselves and the European economy. Many European leaders took advantage of the rich land that Africa had to offer. Africa's fertile soil was a feeding ground for European leaders

who could easily produce raw materials and ship them back to their native country in order to make a hefty profit. As the twentieth century began, colonization only became worse for Africa. "...many colonial administrations had deliberately kept local Africans undereducated and prevented them access to the professional classes in order to avoid unnecessary competition..." (1). This form of oppression left newly formed, independent states, without educated leaders, causing many African nations to begin their decline in the early twentieth century. Angered by their dependence on the European nations, internal wars for political and economic control erupted in the 1970's and 1980's. Hundreds of thousands of African's lost their lives but, it was a risk that they were willing to take in order to gain independence from the European nations. Although many nations, like Ghana, achieved this independence, their uneducated natives were not able to possess the qualities of a proper leader, taking their independence on a turn for the worst. Not only has the continent struggled due to the lack of strong leaders, Africa has developed many economic, social, and political issues since the time of decolonization in the 1960's. In a speech from Kenneth Kuanda, the first president of Zambia, he states that most of Africa's weaknesses are derived from lack of finance and trained personnel (2). Africa's economy was on the line after decolonization. Colonialism forced many Africans into farming for cash crops but, after many nations declared independence, the prices of these cash crops fell drastically. For instance, the price of cocoa, which was produced in Ghana, fell in the 1960's, beginning an economic decline for this newly formed independent country. Africa's past proved to be a major contributor to its future problems. From

early on, Africa had struggled with forming international allies. Rarely did any networks of communication, administration, and transportation between countries work effectively. It was true that the African people did not have the necessary tools or education in order to lead their own independent states. This lack of leadership skills is the backbone for the entirety of Africa's problems within politics and the economy. To the natives, it certainly seemed as if the Europeans were only trying to harm instead of help but, from an outside perspective, colonialism is what Africa needed to spark their independence. Africa has too many problems to deal with on it's own, and it is time that outside forces stepped in more forcefully to help the nations rise up and stand on their own. "[Colonialism] It is a trend that should be encouraged, it seems to me, on a practical as well as moral grounds. There simply is no alternative in nations where governments have crumbled..."(3). In this article, Paul Johnson says it best that there is simply no other way for Africa to thrive without colonialism stepping in once again. Through the years, the problems in Africa have only grown exponentially. In 2005, half of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa lived on \$1. 25 a day. Presently, twenty-five million people in the Sub-Saharan area are HIV positive, causing the average life expectancy to fall. In the 2007/2008 United Nations Human Development Report, all of the twenty-two lowest rank countries were located in Africa. Since the end of colonialism in the 1960's, these problems have certainly progressed and it is time for outside nations to step in to help control Africa's problems. In *The Challenge For Africa*, Maathai introduces the " three-legged stool". This stool consists of three legs; the first stands for democratic space, the second stands for sustainable management of natural

resources, and the third stands for fairness, respect, and compassion. I agree strongly with Johnson's method of introducing colonialism again to the African people but, we can only step in if we follow the guidelines of the three-legged stool. This stool existed before colonialism and corruption but now, "...in the intervening years, the stool has been bashed, its legs broken, and then reconstituted with weak or pliable plastic..."(4). Paul Johnson's colonialism exists of limited duration in order to ensure an effective self-government. This new form of colonialism does not wish to repeat the problems of the 1960's, and the only way of doing so is by making sure that the country is economically and politically stable before the colonizing government leaves. Sure, it is easy for outside governments to give funds to African countries in order to fix their problems but, these funds will not fix the broken stool. Governments have to act alongside broken governments in third-world African countries in order to truly fix the ongoing problems, and to make them cease for good. Africa has a lot to accomplish before it can fully reach independence and rid itself of colonial rule. In 2000, the United Nations developed the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), in order to increase global development policies and practices worldwide. By 2015, there are eight MDG's to be met in Sub-Saharan Africa. African governments must eradicate poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, fight HIV/AIDS and other diseases, ensure environmental stability and finally, develop a global partnership for development. Three years does not seem like enough time for Sub-Saharan Africa to meet such extensive criteria but, with a plan for the future, they can

take steps that will eventually lead them towards such success. I believe that a fix for Africa needs to come from within. Since the majority of Africa's problems post-colonialism were due to lack of proper knowledge and leadership, it makes sense that Africa is in dire need of better education for its people. Knowledgeable countries like the United States, France, and Britain have the power and ability to institute a strong educational system, which would allow students, both young and old, to learn more about their own country and the outside world as well. We need to start with the children and teach them the fundamentals of a proper government, as well as leadership skills, so that as they age, Africa will continue to flourish. With a strong government background, the rest of Africa's problems will almost all fall into place. The economy will be able to straighten itself out, for the most part, and the social issues of poverty and hunger will be eradicated over time. However, none of these future plans will be feasible without the help and support of colonialism. It takes a government to build a government, and Africa needs strong government support in order to assist them in building their own powerful administration. Without a revival of colonialism, Africa will not be able to reach its goals of meeting the eight MDG's by 2015, leaving its problems to multiply as they have in past years. A renewal of colonialism seems to be the only possible fix for Africa's problems. Colonialism instilled many problems for Africa in the nineteenth century, causing its people to become hesitant about colonial rule in the future. Through Paul Johnson's "new" form of colonialism, one in which the trustee must not withdraw until the country is economically and politically stable, Africa will no longer be in

despair. Colonialism may have not been the best thing for Africa in the past, but it is the best repair tactic for the future.