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colonial rule is also
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Introduction

The history of Angolan self-assertion as an independent country after the colonial rule is not merely an Angolan phenomenon, but also the struggle for second liberation from the black colonial rule is also part of the larger story of the rising awareness of the black people to struggle for their dignity and self-fulfillment. Angola being one of African country that has experienced civil war even after the end of the colonial era, questions are now being asked whether the current post independence civil wars in Angola are attributable to the colonial rule.

This can only be well answered if the history of Angola and the colonial rule in Angola is understood.

Pre-colonial state in Angola

Little can be said about Angola history before the sixteenth century, but what is known is that, it was inhabited by the Bushmen before the immigration of Bantu community to Angola. The Bantu community is believed to have migrated from somewhere in Cameroon to the present day land called Angola. The Bushmen were mere hunters and gatherers of wild animals and fruits whereas the Bantu people were iron smelters and farmers. The distribution of these native people was densely populated in the central Angolan region which lay in the southern reaches of Mbailundu, Wambu and northern Ngalangi at the same time, the eastern region such as Viye, Muschinda in southern Ngalangi were sparsely populated (Heywood and Thornton P. 214- 217). During this pre-colonial period the Bantu gained dominance in Angola resulting to the formation of ethnic kingdoms.

Notable was the Kingdom of Congo which was supreme kingdom with smaller kingdom units such as the Ndongo kingdom and Ovimbundu Kingdoms (Miller P. 103). At this time, the first Portuguese arrived in Angola but they were just missionaries and explorers who with the assistance of these kingdoms spread the Christianity message to the African natives. Some of these kingdoms continued to exist even after the arrival of the white settlers who later colonized Angola.

Colonial period

In early 1400, the white peasant arrived in Angola not only as explorers and Christian missionaries, but also as traders. During this time, the settlers mostly the Dutch and the Britons started doing some business with the native Angolans. Even though the Portuguese had arrived in Angola earlier than the Britons and the Dutch, they were just as explorers and missionaries but later on they started trading with the Angolans. The scramble for the African resources by the Portuguese, Britons and the Dutch resulted to a conflict between them selves which later on gave birth to the Berlin conference of 1884 to solve the conflicting interest for resources not only in Angola but Africa at large.

After the Berlin conference Angola was declared a Portuguese territory and it later colonized Angola for a period lasting 500 years. The arrival of Paulo Dais de Novias in Angola with his convoy of Portuguese families and solders, led to the start of Portuguese colonialism. The Portuguese created close alliance with the Kongo kingdom by offering fire arms, Christianity as well as other advanced technology equipment to the kingdom and in return they received slaves, minerals and ivory. As time passed by, the alliances

between the Portuguese and the local kingdoms started to weaken as a result of the Portuguese participation in the local kingdom economic and political affairs. Some of the kingdom like the Ndogo Kingdom staged resistance to the colonial rule as the Portuguese used military force to safeguard their slave trade business which the kingdom was against (Bender P.

2-19). The effect of the slave trade was disturbing the Angolans kingdom as most of able-bodied members of families were taken away as slaves, thus weakening the local community productivity and their administrative units to the colonial administrative structure; which fragmented the traditional power structures of the kingdoms and appointed trustworthy dummy leaders to those kingdoms. In 1836 after the abolition of slave trade, the Portuguese reverted to the use of forced labor in exploiting the Angolan land and natural resources. The Portuguese established their control over the Angolans' labor force by commanding legislation that obliged the Angolans to work for the colonial government and ensured that the production of raw materials such as rubber and coffee was possible through the use of forced labor (Jill P.

260-265). Portuguese colonialism in Angola later seemed not to care about the local people social- economic development rather to exploit the Angolans' natural resources for the benefit of the Portuguese and the locals were discriminated against some of the privileges the Portuguese enjoyed such as, Angolans went to poor schools in the missionary camps, poor health services and no infrastructure was being developed by the colonies for the Angolans as compared to them, they had quality education and health services. After the colonial masters heard the resentment of the local

community for poor service delivery, and too much rebellion of forced labor in the white farms plantations which plunged the country into chaos in 1961, the government in Lisbon responded strongly by sending large numbers of troops to Angola to rein force their continued rule over Angola (Guus and Birmingham Para. 1- 10). Reforms were harried during this time to improve the provision of good education, good heath services by building schools and hospitals, and the withdrawal of forced labor so as to appease Angolans. The oppression of the indigenous Angolans' by the Portuguese rule, discrimination between the different categories of citizen and forced labor, resulted to the resistance to colonial rule which finally led to the up raising of nationalism movement for independence (Wheeler P. 1-22).

The upraise of Angolans' nationalism movements for independence

After the Portuguese refused to withdraw the colonial rule from the Angolans' in early 1960s, two nationalism parties were found to fight for independence which were the FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola) and MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola). The MPLA had set its territory in the neighborhood of Luanda the homeland of Mbundu people and had the following from many other grouping in the urban centers as well as assimilated native Angolans and other sympathetic mixed-race group became part of the MPLA where as, the UNITA (Union for the Total Independence of Angola) became a voice of the third political tradition with a goal of fighting for economic rights formed by Jonas Savimbi after his dissatisfaction with the MPLA lack of military power and its dependence on

the US (Miller P. 103). The exploitation of the feelings of segregation of Angola's largest tribal group under the leadership of Ovimbundu and Savimbi, led to built up of their own territory in the centre and south of Angola by conducting small guerrilla operations with the assistance of international community. During this time of nationalism, major military and political conflict between the Portuguese colonial rule and Angolan nationalist intensified which led to the ' first Angolan war' staged by the movements using the guerrilla tactics after the Portuguese had bloodily repressed a mass protest against colonial rule where hundreds of whites and thousands of black farm workers were killed. Thanks to the growing pressure from Portugal which indirectly brought to an end of this war in 1974 as none of the armed movements succeeded to stop the war.

The Portuguese desire to maintain their colonial rule over Angola diminished as more fighting broke out in many parts of Angola not excluding the capital, Luanda, where the armies of the movements were expected to maintain tranquility with joint patrols (Wheeler P. 3-9). The pro-independence movements later on experienced some divisions among themselves as a result of ethnic identification of these movements to outsmart each other for political gains rather than expressing their original sentiments of oppression by the colonial rule. The FNLA enjoyed the political and military support from African countries, China and the US but later some African countries defected to support MPLA which, though it suffered from internal conflicts and had a weak military, gradually it outmaneuvered the other movements politically and diplomatically to gain supremacy in early 1975. Under immense international pressure, the Portuguese and the three Angolan

nationalism movements signed an accord in Alvor to end the colonial rule in which Portugal was to provide support for transitional government, a constitution, elections and independence.

On 11th November 1975, Angola got its independence from the colonial masters with Agostinho Neto becoming the first president of the republic of Angola. However, this independence did not last for long as the country plunged in a civil war again (Chabal and Nuno P. 124 -170).

Post- independence

After independence from the colonial masters, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) declared their own short-lived republics which were the Democratic Republic of Angola(DRA) and the Social Democratic Republic of Angola(SDRA) on 24th November 1975, but this marriage between the DRA and SDRA was short lived, as it dissolved in early the following year after independence.

By the end of February 1976 the Angolan military with the help of Cuba, destabilized FNLA as Zaire came to the support of UNITA and the South African forces withdrew its support from UNITA but still the war continued. Some time later UNITA led by Jonas Savimbi got the support of the United States government and then took its military fight in the southern part of Angola to capture more territories under the government control, while the Angolan government was supported by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In 1979, Agostinho Neto died and he was succeeded by Jose Eduardo dos Santos at the time when the United States and the Soviet Union

quarrel in Vietnam had come to an end and Angola became an alternative place for them to continue their conflict with each side negating to help Angola end its civil war rather, they had their own specific interest to play out: their geo-political enmity. Zaire and South Africa continued to be the regional allies of the US, Congo aligned itself with the Soviet Union and Cuba gave military and civilian support to the MPLA (Marcum P. 312). During this time, Diamonds and oil provided the government with the needed revenue to function as a government finance the ongoing war against Savimbi and maintain the high living standards of the Angolan elites. Angola country side became neglected and was left to its own survival strategies which forced people to flee to the towns as prospects in the urban centers seemed more attractive despite the encroachment to slums.

South Africa again involved itself in the hunt of a newly found forces by the name South-West Africa People's Organization in Southern part of Angola and soon it established grounds to give more support to UNITA movement, which gained control of more and more territory and as a result, FAPLA was not impressed by the South Africa move, hence it launched a strategy to fight and dismantle UNITA and its ally South Africa. In 1987, FAPLA with the help of by the Soviet Union launched some fights against UNITA but they did not succeed to defeat UNITA (Kibble P. 539-542). Instead FAPLA was defeated and later on Cuba intervened in the support of FAPLA to stop UNITA and South Africa advances, leading to the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale in 1987. Angola and the United States went to talks for diplomatic solution of the civil war in June 1987 and later on Cuba was included in the negotiations in January 28, 1988 and South Africa joined the negotiations in March 9, 1988

which gave birth to the Tripartite Accord of December 22, 1988 signed by Angola, Cuba and South Africa in which Cuba and south Africa withdrew their troops from Angola. The Bicese agreement in 1991 outlined for election process for an autonomous Angola with the United Nations acting as an overseer. After the elections were held, Jose Eduardo dos Santos won with 48% of the total votes, against his opponent Jonathan Savimbi who garnered 41% of the total vote cast.

Jonathan Savimbi rubbished the results and returned to war and a second peace agreement, by the name the Lusaka protocol was brokered in Lusaka, Zambia which got signed on November 20, 1994 by the two parties (Kibble P. 541-547). The peace agreement between the government and UNITA provided for the incorporation of former UNITA rebels into the government and other rebel groups in the military but it did not solve the problem because in 1995, localized fighting restarted again leading to the formation of a coalition government in April 1997.

In late 1998, serious fighting broke out when Jonathan's UNITA movement renewed the conflict for a second time, claiming that the MPLA was not fulfilling its mandate which forced the United Nations Security Council to vote on August 28, 1997 to impose sanctions against UNITA movement and gave the Angolan military a leeway to launch massive offensive operations to wipe out Savimbi's conventional capacity and recaptured all major towns which were previously held by Savimbi's forces, even though Angola remained in turmoil as Savimbi returned to guerrilla tactics. The civil war rendered many people to become internally displaced persons and

thousands were killed, but the war came to an end when Jonathan Savimbi was killed in 2002 (Talbot Para. 1-6).

The Peace Process After the civil war

In 2000, a commission comprising representatives from the Angolan government, UNITA, and the troika observer states comprising the Russia, Portugal and the United States; chaired by United Nation Secretary General's Special Envoy in Angola, Professor Ibrahim Gambari was formed to direct the initial tasks necessary to set up a peace process as specified in the Lusaka Protocol of 1994. The commission was later dissolved in late 2002 and a new round-table for negotiations between the Government and UNITA was put in place whereby, the UNITA ministers were given some government post as outlined in the Lusaka Protocol. Also after agreeing to make some constitutional changes between the two parties and UNITA seemed no longer a threat to the national interest, the United Nation Security Council lifted sanctions against UNITA (Barry P.

551-568). After decades of war, Angola still faces many serious political challenges such as the humanitarian crisis, unaccounted weapons, Harassment and extortion by armed groups but the signing of the ceasefire opened way to large parts of the country for humanitarian aid after the United Nation appeal for emergency assistance from the donor community. However, Donor skepticism was high about the Angolan government not able fund it's self yet, they are endowed with natural wealth which was able to give the needed humanitarian aid and build its infrastructure (Guus and Birmingham Para. 10- 16).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Angola underwent through many challenging occasions from the colonial oppression, civil wars instigated by the political elites at the expense of continued poverty facing the Angolans and to the present day, Angola is still faced with a lot of challenges which are not limited to humanitarian crisis, harassment by armed group and bad governance. Just like many African countries, Angola has been blaming on European community on its current woes. However these sentiments might hold ground, much to blame is the Angolans leadership since it has failed to deliver to its people rather they have engaged in fighting for the resources to enrich themselves at the expense of the impoverished citizens. The colonial government also played a key role in impoverishing the Angolans, starting from the slave trade which took away the able men and women for slavery to Brazil and Europe who could have assisted in nation rebuilding after the end of the colonial rule, stealing of the local resources to Portugal such as diamond minerals and agricultural raw materials to their industries in Europe without developing the Angola infrastructures during their rule also impoverished them further. Colonialism promoted tribalism in Angola by favoring the communities who were supporting the colonial government hence creating enmity among the local communities. The international community is also to blame for the challenges facing Angola right now. The involvement of the international community in Angola Civil war by the supporting the different warring groups is to blame. They should have put a united push for peace in Angola rather than supporting different fighting groups which led to a prolonged civil war because of individual interest of the international community and the warring groups.

Recommendations

The Angolans and African countries at large should rise up against individual partisan interest. They should strive to work with a common interest of serving their nations and give hope to its citizens. It's all possible to heal and move forward even after the colonial period and the long civil war in Angola. At the same time, the international community must come to the rescue and assist Angola to reconstruct itself by providing the humanitarian aid to the still suffering Angolans and address for compensation for the oppressed Angolans due to the colonial rule.

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