

Forces that gave rise to african nationalism



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

African nationalism refers to the cumulative actions that arose to challenge the main activities of imperialism namely; the slave trade, forceful occupation of Africa and racism. " One of the earliest forces which sowed seeds for African nationalism was the works of proponents of restoration of black's dignity" (Ackah, 67).

In order to subjugate and dominate people of African origin, colonialists alienated and marginalized the African cultural heritage. Proponents of blacks' dignity, thus, fashioned a coherent philosophy which would enable the African not only to enhance his material welfare but also to elevate him from the centuries of degradation and re-establish his dignity.

Common of the proponents were the Negritude poets, Aime Cesaire and Leopold S. Senghor. In 1934 Cesaire and Senghor founded a journal named L'Étudiant Noir, which they used as a vehicle to propagate their literary conception of Negritude. In South Africa the notion of Negritude was expressed through the Black Consciousness Movement led by Biko. Biko explained the Black Consciousness ideology as " an attitude of mind and a way of life".

The proponents set pace for a positive call to liberate the black world from the reigns of imperialism". (Ackah, 68)

Another force was the " Return to Africa by Africans" call. " As a way of protest against the merciless shipment of Africans to Europe and the Americas blacks living in the Diasporas - America and Europe pan Africanists began to plan their return to their motherland Africa." (Bankie, 172).

Martin R. Delany, for example, between 1831 and 1832 planned such a return travel to Africa, which he referred to as ' the land of my ancestry. In 1852 he published his call for Afro-Americans to emigrate from the USA. Though the National Emigration's Re-emigration Project was not a success, it was of historical significance in that amongst other things, it produced a clear and politically well-founded statement of Pan-African nationalist ideas.

Also attributed to the theme of the liberation of the African continent was the maiden call for the unity of Africa in the form of political and economic unification. " Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, became the chief proponent of this expression, ' he believed that the only way to resolve the problems of imperialism and neo-colonialism in Africa was the formation of an African unitary socialist government" (Ackah, 78).

Such calls for continental unity gave birth to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963, which became a vital platform for the fight for independence of countries which, by then, were yet to attain self rule.

By World War II, Africans had become more politically aware and exposed. This was contributed by rapid urban growth and acculturation of Africans into urban society (as opposed to village/tribal society). Some had also become enlightened through education, through education Africans were enlightened of self-rule doctrines such as " self-determination" doctrine espoused in the Atlantic Charter.

" A distinct exposure, however, was the Africans chance to fight along side the Europeans in the World War II. This gave them an insight in demystifying the Europeans as people who could be fought and defeated. On coming

back, the war veterans were key figures in organizing armed revolt against the whites". (Bankie, 217)

Factors for under development

Five decades since the first African country gained independence national development in Africa is still problematic. The factors which can be attributed to the under development can be espoused as below:

One of the reasons colonial powers granted independence to African countries is that," they had realized that they could surrender political control while still maintaining economic control. In order to maintain such economic control, the colonial powers during the transition to political independence, established governments deemed independent yet run by moderate nationalists who were to be collaborative with them" (Clarke, 84).

Thus, even after independence colonialists continued to economically exploit (and hence under-develop) Africa through their " installed' moderate African cronies.

Also, " the developed west took advantage of the African socio-political and economic instability. Cases where minerals and oil controlled by African rebel groups were sold at lower prices to the international communities are common in the unstable part of Africa. Furthermore, international power struggles such as the Cold War have been propagated on African soil: just like Bin Laden and the Taliban' (Clarke, 98).

For example most of the arsenal used by Angola's UNITA rebels had been supplied by the US. The US, however, had vested interests of fighting the

then worldwide threat of communism as propagated by the Soviet Union and also to access cheap oil through UNITA.

International monetary fund (IMF) and the World bank are also to blame for Africa's developmental undoing. " These institutions have been extending developmental loans to the African countries. However, such loans are attached with numerous inhibitive conditions. One such crippling conditions attached to the loans was the " structural adjustments programmes" (SAPs)of the early 1990s. SAPs brought about conditions like, among others, privatization of state corporations and opening up of African markets to global players" Clarke, 102).

Privatization as proposed by SAPs brought situations where state firms were fraudently and sold to corrupt individuals. The other condition that the African countries open up their markets saw the entrant of western firms which were more capitalized hence unfair competition and imbalance of trade.

Furthermore, " the majority of countries end up paying back much more than the amount that they borrowed. As a result, loan repayments form large percentages of African budgets, taking away money otherwise harnessed in funding further economic or social development" (Clarke, 102)

Independent African countries are also faced with deep corruption. " Small black elite that emerged in many African states following independence are expanding in terms of their wealth. This small corrupt group becomes richer while more and more people become poorer. In essence they are anxious to secure their individual financial futures than to consolidate wealth and economic gains for their countries". (Ackah, 172)

Coups or forceful seizure of power are also a major hindrance to development in the independent Africa. “ In the first two decades of independence, there were some forty successful coups and countless other attempts.

Such coups brings about regimes that are mainly concerned in cementing their grip to power, this is as opposed to furthering any tangible economic development for their countries. Counter coups to topple such dictatorial regimes also disturbs any progress that the country may be having” Clarke, 114).