

# Independence and Nationalism in the Developing World, 1945-1993

## THE STORY MATTERS...

In 1950 the South African government passed laws segregating black Africans from white Africans. This system of legalized racism is known as apartheid. Opposition and resistance to apartheid came from leaders within South Africa, such as Nelson Mandela. Mandela, head of the African National Congress, was imprisoned for 27 years because of his protests. Following his release, Mandela led negotiations to transform the South African government into one based on equality. In 1994 he became South Africa's first democratically elected black president.

## Lesson 32-3

# Africa

### READING HELPDESK

#### Academic Vocabulary

transfer                      role

#### Content Vocabulary

principle of nonalignment                      discrimination

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can political change cause conflict?
- How can political relationships affect economic relationships?

### IT MATTERS BECAUSE

Africa's road to independence has not been an easy one. Free from colonial rule, many African nations faced serious political, economic, social, and health challenges.

## Independence and New Nations

**GUIDING QUESTION** *What challenges did newly independent African countries face? What challenges have been overcome by African countries?*

After World War II, Europeans realized that colonial rule in Africa would have to end. The Charter of the United Nations supported this belief. It stated that all colonial peoples should have the right to self-determination. In the late 1950s and 1960s, most African nations achieved independence.

In 1957 the Gold Coast, renamed Ghana and under the guidance of Kwame Nkrumah, was the first British colony to gain independence. In 1960 the Belgian Congo (now Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Nigeria gained their independence from the Belgians and the British respectively. Many other nations followed, including Uganda, Kenya, and Botswana. Portugal finally surrendered Mozambique and Angola in 1975. In North Africa, the French granted full independence to Morocco and Tunisia in 1956. Because Algeria was home to a million French settlers, France chose to keep control there. However, Algerian nationalists began a guerrilla war to

liberate their homeland. The French leader, Charles de Gaulle, granted Algeria its independence in 1962.

### South Africa and Apartheid

In South Africa, where whites dominated the political system, the process was more complicated. Blacks began organizing against white rule and formed the African National Congress in 1912. Its goal of economic and political reform met with little success.

At the same time, by the 1950s, South African whites (descendants of the Dutch, known as Afrikaners) had strengthened the laws separating whites and blacks. The result was a system of racial segregation known as apartheid ("apartness").

Blacks demonstrated against these laws, but the white government brutally repressed the demonstrators. In 1960 police opened fire on people who were leading a peaceful march in Sharpeville, killing 69 people, two-thirds of whom were shot in the back. After the arrest of African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela in 1962, members of the ANC called for armed resistance to the white government.

### The Pan-Africa Movement

The African states that achieved independence in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s still faced many problems. The leaders of these states, as well as their citizens, dreamed of stable governments and economic prosperity. Many of these dreams have yet to be realized.

Some African leaders believed in the dream of Pan-Africanism—the unity of all black Africans, regardless of national boundaries. In the view of Pan-Africanists, all black African peoples shared a common identity. Several of the new African leaders, including Leopold Senghor of Senegal, Kwame Nkrumah, and Jomo Kenyatta, supported Pan-Africanism.

Nkrumah in particular hoped that a Pan-African union would join all the new countries of the continent in a broader community. His dream never became reality.

However, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), founded by the leaders of 32 African states in 1963, was a concrete result of the belief in Pan-Africanism. The OAU gave support to African groups fighting against colonialism. The group also presented a united front against the influence of the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Some African countries were part of the non-aligned movement and did not take sides in the Cold War.

## Analyzing PRIMARY SOURCES

### Nelson Mandela on Democracy

“During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

- Nelson Mandela, statement at the Rivonia Trial, April 20, 1964, from *In His Own Words*

#### IDENTIFYING POINTS OF VIEW

How did Mandela’s words challenge the idea of apartheid?

### The Cold War in Africa

Most leaders of the newly independent states came from the urban middle class. They had studied in Europe or the United States and knew European languages. They believed in using the Western democratic model in Africa.

Some, such as Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya believed in Western-style capitalism. Leaders in Angola and Mozambique followed Soviet-style communism. Other leaders, such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Sékou Touré of Guinea, and Patrice Lumumba of the Republic of Congo, preferred an “African form of socialism.”

The African form of socialism was not like that practiced in the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe. Instead, it was based on African traditions of community in which ownership of the country’s wealth would be put into the hands of the people. As Nyerere declared in 1967, “The basis of socialism is a belief in the oneness of man and the common historical destiny of mankind. Its basis ... is human equality.”

Regardless of political ideology, many people hoped that independence would lead to democratic government. They were soon disappointed. Between 1957 and 1982, more than 70 leaders were violently overthrown. In the 1980s, either the military or a single party ruled many major African states. In the 1990s multiparty elections increased, but single-party rule still predominated.

Despite the OAU’s push for non-alignment in the Cold War, some African nations were drawn into proxy wars as the United States and the Soviet Union took

opposing sides in political struggles in the newly independent countries, notably in Angola, Somalia, and the Congo. This caused prolonged conflict and corruption in some parts of Africa, and it undermined political development.

A central example is the state of the Congo. After the Congo gained its independence from Belgium, the new state was unstable, and its early leaders struggled to keep the southern provinces from breaking away. By 1965, the chief of staff of the Congo’s armed forces, Joseph Mobutu, gained control of the government in a coup. A firm opponent of communism, Mobutu was supported financially by the United States. It was believed that he would serve as a safeguard against the spread of Soviet influence in central Africa. Mobutu made many authoritarian changes. He outlawed all political parties but his own, elections became rare, and corruption under Mobutu’s unchallenged rule became common. When the Soviet Union fell in the early 1990s, relations between Mobutu and the United States cooled.

### Economic and Political Challenges

Independence did not bring economic prosperity to the new African nations. Most still relied on the export of a single crop or natural resource. Liberia, for example, depended on the export of rubber; Nigeria, on oil. When prices dropped, their economies suffered. To make matters worse, Africa depended on foreign investment. Most African states imported technology and manufactured goods from the West and depended on foreign financial aid to develop their countries. The new states also sometimes created their own problems. Scarce national resources were spent on military equipment or expensive consumer goods rather than on building the foundations for an industrial economy. Corruption was common. Droughts and rapid population growth have also slowed economic growth and taxed resources. Since the 1980s, recurring droughts in many African countries, including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Uganda have caused starvation and migration.

As a result of these problems, poverty was widespread among both rural and urban dwellers. As cities grew, massive slums populated by displaced rural people surrounded cities, overwhelming sanitation and transportation systems. Pollution and perpetual traffic jams were the result. Millions lived without access to electricity or even clean water. Meanwhile, the fortunate few enjoyed lavish lifestyles. The rich in many East African countries are known as the *wabenzi*, or Mercedes-Benz people.

Diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, also presented major challenges to African progress. AIDS is a worldwide epidemic, but Africa is hardest hit. HIV / AIDS has had a serious impact on children and families in Africa. Many children have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Often, relatives are too poor to care for these children. Many orphans thus become heads of households filled with younger siblings. Extended families have been the source of

support in difficult times, especially in rural Africa. The HIV / AIDS epidemic, however, has overwhelmed this support system. African nations have taken steps to fight the epidemic. It has proved a tremendous burden, however, because many of these countries do not have the money or health facilities to educate their citizens about the disease and how to protect against it. Nor can they purchase the drugs that would extend the lives of those with HIV.

#### Nationalist Conflicts

Within many African nations, warring ethnic groups undermined the concept of nationhood. This is not surprising, because the colonial powers had drawn the boundaries of African nations arbitrarily. Virtually all these states included widely diverse ethnic, linguistic, and territorial groups.

For example, during the late 1960s, civil war tore Nigeria apart. Conflicts also broke out among ethnic groups in Zimbabwe. Farther north, in central Africa, fighting between the Hutu and Tutsi created unstable governments in Rwanda and Burundi. During the colonial period, Hutu and Tutsi peoples lived together under European control. After independence in 1962, two new countries were created: Rwanda and Burundi. The population in both countries was mixed, but in Rwanda, the Hutu majority ran the government. They resented the position of the Tutsis, who had gotten the best education and jobs under the Belgians. In 1994 a Hutu rampage left some 500,000 Tutsi dead in Rwanda.

Not all the news in Africa has been bad. Popular demonstrations led to the collapse of one-party regimes and the emergence of democracies in several countries. One case was that of Idi Amin of Uganda. After ruling by terror and brutal repression throughout the 1970s, Amin was deposed in 1979. Dictatorship also came to an end in Ethiopia, Liberia, and Somalia. In these cases, however, the fall of the regime was later followed by bloody civil war. Apartheid also ended in South Africa.

### The End of Apartheid

One of the most remarkable events of recent African history was the 1994 election of Nelson Mandela to the presidency of the Republic of South Africa. Imprisoned in 1962 for his activities with the African National Congress, Mandela spent almost 26 years in maximum-security prisons in South Africa. For all those years, Mandela never wavered from his resolve to secure the freedom of his country.

Mandela was offered freedom in 1985, with conditions. Yet he refused to accept a conditional freedom: "Only free men can negotiate. Prisoners cannot enter into contracts .... Your freedom and mine cannot be separated."

Nobel Peace Prize winner (1984) Bishop Desmond Tutu and others worked to free Mandela and to end apartheid. Eventually, worldwide pressure forced the South African government to dismantle apartheid laws. In 1990 Mandela was released from prison. In 1993 the government of F. W. de Klerk agreed to hold democratic national

elections—the first in South Africa's history. In 1994 Nelson Mandela became South Africa's first black president. In his presidential inaugural address, he expressed his hopes:

#### PRIMARY SOURCE

"We shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity – a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world."

-from *In His Own Words*

#### READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Evaluating** To what extent were the goals of Pan-Africanism realized in Africa in the years following independence?

## Society and Culture

**GUIDING QUESTION** *What factors have affected African society and culture?*

Africa is a study in contrasts. Old and new, indigenous and foreign, live side by side. One result is a constant tension between traditional ways and Western culture in most African countries.

In general, the impact of the West has been greatest in the cities. After all, the colonial presence was first and most firmly established in the cities. Many cities, including Lagos, Nigeria; Cape Town, South Africa; Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo; and Nairobi, Kenya, are direct products of colonial rule. Most African cities today look like cities elsewhere in the world.

About sixty percent of the population of Africa lives outside the major cities. Modern influence has had less of an impact there. Millions of people throughout Africa live much as their ancestors did—in thatched dwellings without modern plumbing and electricity. They farm, hunt, or raise livestock by traditional methods, wear traditional clothing, and practice traditional beliefs. Conditions such as drought or flooding affect the ability of rural Africans to grow crops or to tend herds. Migration to the cities for work is one solution. This can be very disruptive to families and villages. Many urban people view rural people as backward. Rural dwellers view the cities as corrupting and destructive to traditional African values.

After independence, women's roles in African society changed. Almost without exception, women were allowed to vote and run for political office. Some became leaders of their countries. Women still hold few political offices, however. Although women dominate some professions, such as teaching, child care, and clerical work, they do not share in all career opportunities. Most African women are employed in low-paid positions, such as farm laborers, factory workers, and servants. Furthermore, in many rural areas, traditional attitudes toward women, including arranged marriages, prevail.

The tension between traditional and modern and between indigenous and foreign also affects African culture.

Africans have kept their local artistic traditions and have adapted them to foreign influences. A dilemma for many contemporary African artists is finding a balance between Western techniques and training on the one hand and the rich heritage of traditional African art forms on the other. In some countries, governments make the artists' decisions. Artists are told to depict scenes of traditional African life. These works are designed to serve the tourist industry.

African writers have often addressed the tensions and dilemmas that modern Africans face. The conflicting demands of town versus country and indigenous versus

foreign were the themes of most of the best-known works of the 1960s and 1970s. Chinua Achebe, a Nigerian novelist and winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1989, writes about the problems of Africans caught up in the conflict between traditional and Western values. In his most famous novel *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe portrays the simple dignity of traditional African village life.

#### READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Differentiating** How are women's roles different in rural and urban areas in Africa?

### LESSON 32-3 REVIEW

#### Reviewing Vocabulary

1. **Applying** How did the Cold War influence India's principle of nonalignment?

#### Using Your Notes

2. **Identifying** Use your notes to identify some of the problems India faced after its independence.

#### Answering the Guiding Questions

3. **Analyzing** How did India emerge as an independent country?
4. **Drawing Conclusions** What experiences did independence bring to new Southeast Asian countries?

#### Writing Activity

5. **Argument** Pretend you are a citizen of a South or Southeast Asian country that gained its independence. Write an essay about your experiences.