

**DECOLONIZATION IN
AFRICA- GHANA
LECTURE
PRESENTATION BY DR.
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The colonial experience in Africa

- A short-lived episode in Africa's long history
- Crucial transformations that shaped "modern" Africa
- European colonial occupation from mid-1880s
- End of European colonial domination from 1960s
- European colonialism characterized by
 - Political exclusion of African population from decision making
 - Weak and violent nature of the colonial state
 - Unequal and exploitative economy
 - European racism against so-called uncivilized Africans





The colonial state

- The colonial state was the main driver of change during the colonial era
- The colonial state was an under-resourced version of the European state
- It was characterized
 - Authoritarian-style rule
 - Widespread use of violence or coercion
 - Reliance on so-called African institutions ("native authority")
 - Exclusion of the African majority from the decision-making process

The colonial economy

- African workers and resources complemented metropolitan economies
- Colonies supplied raw materials (cash crops and minerals)
- Construction of transport network to extract African resources (roads & railways)
- Limited European investments in colonies before World War II
- Increased investments from 1945 to support European reconstruction and meet African demands
- Economic growth and improving living standards during 1950s

Colonial racism

- European racism in Africa linked to the so-called civilizing
- Africans were portrayed as cultural inferiors in need of transformation
- European rulers portrayed themselves as agents of transformation
- Africans' political exclusion and limited rights justified by their so-called cultural inferiority
- "Civilized" Africans were also excluded and discriminated against

The international post-World War II context

- New international order after the end of World War II
- Decline of European hegemony
- Rise of two super-powers (USA & USSR)
- Creation of the United Nations & Atlantic Charter
- Asian liberation from late 1940s
- Increasing cooperation among western-European countries (origin of the EU)
- Growing rejection of colonial rule
- Acceptance of right of peoples to self-determination

The post-World War II context in Africa

- Rapid development of anti-colonial movements from 1945
- Growing discontent with political exclusion of Africans by colonial rulers
- Dissatisfaction with limited opportunities for Western-educated Africans
- Demands for colonial reforms from mid-1940s to early-1950s
- Demands for end of colonial rule from mid-1950s
- Process led by "intellectual" and "economic" elites
- Liberation strategies through international pressure (most cases)
- Liberation strategies through mass protest (few cases)
- Liberation strategies through armed struggle (exceptional cases)

Ghana's struggle for reform

- Demands to reform colonial order from 1930s
- Dissatisfaction with political exclusion
- Dissatisfaction with cocoa prices and lack of control by producers
- Growing social instability and anti-British protest
- Deterioration of colonial conditions due to 1930s Great Depression
- Demands for reform did not question colonial domination
- World War put local protest on hold

Ghana's struggle for reform

- Local protest resumed at the end of World War II
- Ghanaians expected reforms in exchange for loyalty during war
- Britain created Legislative Council in 1946
- Legislative Council made up of African majority
- Limited power of the Legislative Council (advising role)
- Final decisions taken by Governor General (executive power)
- Dissatisfaction with British timid reforms

Ghana's struggle for liberation

- UGCC believed that immediate independence was not possible
- Nkrumah disagreed with UGCC's conservative approach
- Nkrumah founded the Convention People's Party (CPP) in 1949
- CPP's main objective was political independence
- True transformation required immediate independence
- Nkrumah was ideologically influenced by socialism
- Nkrumah was politically influenced by US & UK activism
- Nkrumah believed in social mobilization as most effective political strategy

Ghana's struggle for liberation

- CPP organized protest movement to gain mass support for independence
- In 1950 Britain did not envision yet decolonization
- CPP civil disobedience and strike campaign to force British to leave
- Arrest of Nkrumah in 1950 strengthened CPP and his leadership
- CPP landslide victory in 1951 legislative election
- Nkrumah became Prime Minister of the Gold Coast in 1952
- Nkrumah set in motion ambitious political and social reforms
- Britain supported reforms in preparation for independence
- Political reforms & imminent independence led to rise of new parties

Ghana's struggle for liberation

- Growing political competition and participation during 1950s
- New parties also supported immediate independence
- Growing opposition to CPP from middle-class and traditional rulers
- CPP won 1954 elections (57% support)
- Northern People's Party emerged as main opposition
- 30% participation in 1954 elections
- Opposition coalition against CPP's proposed post-independence model
- Ghana gains independence on March 6, 1957

Political challenges of independent Ghana

- Political pluralism became a significant challenge
- Ghana inherited flaws and weaknesses of colonial state and economy
- The authoritarian and violent state remained as main legacy
- Ethnic and regional divisions became more visible after independence
- Anticolonial nationalism had not build a common national identity
- Nkrumah's attempt to build common identity based on Pan-Africanism
- Pan-Africanism clashed with ethnic and regional diversity
- Banning of ethnic organizations in 1957 did not stop opposition

Economic challenges of independent Ghana

- Nkrumah sought modernization of Ghana after gaining independence
- True social and economic transformation
- Expansion of education
- Modernization of agricultural production
- Industrialization
- Marxist economic policies guided economic transformation efforts
- Lack of economic resources to achieve ambitious transformations
- Local middle class opposition to economic transformations
- Trade union protest as economic conditions deteriorated

Nkrumah's response to challenges

- Political parties, ethnic associations and trade unions seen as obstacles
- Political freedoms restricted from 1957 ("common good" & "development")
- Political parties were banned in 1964
- Ghana became a single-party country
- Nkrumah was declared president for life
- Authoritarian measures did not stop opposition especially from chiefs
- Deterioration of economic conditions led to growing discontent
- Military coup in 1966 ended Nkrumah's rule
- Nkrumah died in exile in 1972 and democracy was not restored till 1992

Final thoughts

- Nkrumah and Ghana led the way to liberation across much of Africa
- Distinction between Nkrumah the freedom fighter and Nkrumah the statesman
- Not much thought given to understanding nature of colonialism
- The speed of independence caught everybody unprepared



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