

3 New Nations in Africa

TERMS & NAMES

- Negritude movement
- Kwame Nkrumah
- Jomo Kenyatta
- Mau Mau
- Mobutu Sese Seko
- FLN
- Ahmed Ben Bella

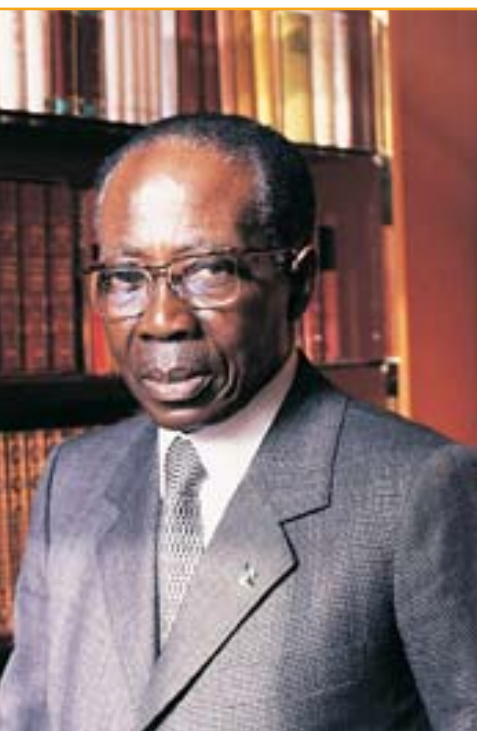
MAIN IDEA

After World War II, African leaders threw off colonial rule and created independent countries.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Today, many of those independent countries are engaged in building political and economic stability.

SETTING THE STAGE Like the Asian countries, the countries of Africa were unwilling to return to colonial domination after World War II. The problem of building strong, independent nations in Africa, however, was complicated by the way in which European imperialists had divided up the continent, plundered its resources, and left the countries unprepared to deal with independence. The colonialists had imposed borders having little to do with the areas where ethnic groups actually lived. While borders separated culturally similar people, they also enclosed traditional enemies.



Leopold Senghor was a politician and poet. In his poetry, he reaffirmed African traditions and the need for Africa to separate from Europe.

Background to Independence

Between the two world wars, an educated middle class had begun to emerge in African cities. Young men went abroad for college and graduate studies. They listened to American jazz musicians and read literature of the Harlem Renaissance. They were influenced by African Americans such as W. E. B. Du Bois as well as by such older Africans as Blaise Diagne, who organized Pan-African (all-African) congresses in 1919 and 1921.

French-speaking Africans and West Indians began to express their growing sense of black consciousness and pride in traditional Africa. They formed the **Negritude movement**—a movement to celebrate African culture, heritage, and values. This movement viewed the black experience as unique. One of the movement's leaders, Leopold Senghor (lay-aw-PAWLD san-GAWR), later became the first president of Senegal.

African soldiers in World War II fought alongside Europeans to “defend freedom.” This experience made them unwilling to accept colonial domination when they returned home. The postwar world changed the thinking of Europeans too. They began to question the cost of maintaining their colonies abroad.

British Colonies Seek Independence

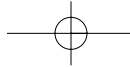
After World War II, many European countries were ready to transfer government to the African people. For the Europeans, the question was when and how to do that.

Ghana Leads the Way to Independence The British colony of the Gold Coast became the first African colony south of the Sahara to achieve independence. Following World War II, the British in the Gold Coast began making preparations. For example, they allowed more Africans to be nominated to the Legislative Council. However, the Africans wanted elected, not nominated, representatives, and they wanted “Freedom Now!” The leader of their largely nonviolent protests was **Kwame Nkrumah** (KWAH-mee uhn-KROO-muh). He was a former teacher who had spent several years studying in the United States. In the 1940s, he worked to liberate the Gold Coast from

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

A. Analyzing

Motives Why might the British have been willing to grant the Gold Coast colony its independence?



the British. Nkrumah organized strikes and boycotts and was often imprisoned by the British government. Ultimately, however, his efforts were successful.

On receiving its independence in 1957, the Gold Coast took the name Ghana. This name honored a famous West African kingdom of the past. Ghana became the first nation governed by black Africans to join the British Commonwealth. During the independence celebrations, Nkrumah addressed the crowds:

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

There is a new African in the world, and that new African is ready to fight his own battle. . . . It is the only way in which we can show the world we are masters of our own destiny.

KWAME NKUMAH, 1957 speech

Nkrumah became Ghana's first prime minister and later its president-for-life. Nkrumah pushed through expensive development plans and economic projects—new roads, new schools, and expanded health facilities. These costly projects soon crippled the country. His programs for industrialization, health and welfare, and expanded educational facilities showed good intentions. However, the expense of the programs undermined the economy and strengthened his opposition.

In addition, Nkrumah was often criticized for spending too much time on Pan-African efforts and neglecting economic problems in his own country. In his dream of a “United States of Africa,” Nkrumah was influenced by the thinking of Marcus Garvey. Garvey was a Jamaican-born black man who in the 1920s called for forcing all Europeans out of Africa and creating a black empire there. Nkrumah, influenced by Garvey (among others), wanted to create an Africa ruled by Africans. Nkrumah helped develop the Pan-African Congress held in Manchester, England, in 1945. Later, in 1958, he hosted the first Pan-African meeting held in Africa. This led to the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

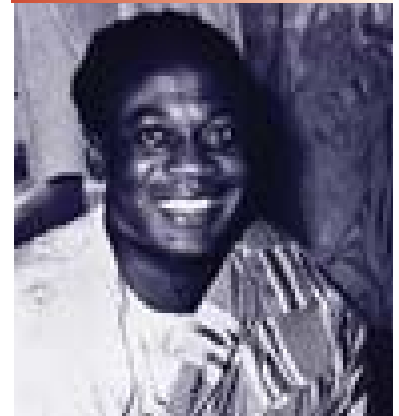
In 1966, while Nkrumah was in China, the army and police in Ghana seized power. Since then, the country has shifted back and forth between civilian and military rule, and has struggled for economic stability. Jerry Rawlings, an Air Force pilot, seized power in 1979 and again in 1981. In 2000, the first open elections were held.

Kenya and the Mau Mau Rebellion British settlers had taken over prize farmland in the northern highlands of Kenya. They fiercely resisted independence for Kenya. They were forced to accept black self-government as a result of two developments. One was the strong leadership of Kenyan nationalist **Jomo Kenyatta**, a Kikuyu educated in London. The second was the rise of the **Mau Mau** (MOW mow). This was a secret society made up mostly of Kikuyu farmers forced out of the highlands by the British.

The Mau Mau's aim was primarily to frighten the white farmers into leaving the highlands rather than to engage in outright war. Kenyatta had no connection to the Mau Mau. However, he refused to condemn the organization and was imprisoned by the British for a time for this refusal. By the time the British granted Kenya independence in 1963, more than 10,000 black Kenyans and 100 white Kenyans had been killed.

Kenyatta became president of the new nation. He worked hard to unite the various ethnic and language groups in the country. Nairobi, the capital, grew into a major business center of East Africa. When Kenyatta died in 1978, his successor, Daniel arap Moi, was less successful in governing the country. Moi faced more and more opposition to his one-party rule. Under him, university strikes and protests resulted in the deaths of some students. These demonstrations put pressure on Moi to make the country more democratic.

HISTORY MAKERS



Kwame Nkrumah
1909–1972

Kwame Nkrumah studied at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania from 1935 to 1939. After graduating from Lincoln, he went on to earn a master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

Nkrumah studied socialism, especially the writings of Marx and Lenin, and nationalism, especially the thinking of Marcus Garvey. He became president of the African Students' Organization of the United States and Canada.

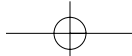
Nkrumah returned to the Gold Coast in 1947. He helped to stage strikes and riots against the government. He said at the time, “We prefer self-government with danger to servitude in tranquility.”

Background

Many of the leaders of the newly independent nations of Africa developed a pan-African viewpoint. That is, their vision took in the development of all of Africa, not just their own countries.

Vocabulary

Kikuyu: a member of a people of central and southern Kenya.



Africa, 1955



Africa, 1975



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

- Location** Which countries in Africa were already independent in 1955?
- Location** In what decade did most of the African nations gain their independence?

In the early 1990s, Kenya's economy suffered a severe reversal. Adding to the nation's woes were corruption in Moi's government and ethnic conflicts that killed hundreds and left thousands homeless.

The Congo Gains Independence

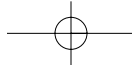
Of all the European possessions in Africa, probably the most exploited was the Belgian Congo. Belgium had ruthlessly plundered the colony's rich resources of rubber and copper. It had employed a system of forced labor. While draining wealth from the colony, Belgium had provided no social services. It also had made no attempt to prepare the people for independence.

Independence Brings Change Belgium's granting of independence in 1960 to the Congo (known as Zaire [zah-IHR] from 1965 to 1997) resulted in upheaval. Patrice Lumumba became the nation's first prime minister. He ruled a divided country. In the mineral-rich southeastern province of Katanga, a local leader named Moïse Tshombe (MOH-zee CHUHM-bee) declared that region's independence. This was a serious threat, especially since copper from Katanga's mines was the nation's primary export.

Intervention by outside forces added to the problems. Tshombe was backed by Belgian mining interests. Lumumba, with Communist connections, first appealed to the United Nations for help in putting down Tshombe's rebellion. He then turned to the Soviet Union for aid. At this point, a coup led by an army officer, Colonel Joseph Mobutu, later known as **Mobutu Sese Seko** (moh-BOO-too SAY-say SAY-koh), overthrew Lumumba and turned him over to his enemy, Tshombe. Lumumba was murdered while in Tshombe's custody. Tshombe himself ruled briefly until he was overthrown by Mobutu, who seized power in a bloodless coup in 1965.

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

B. Making Inferences Why was the Congo vulnerable after independence?



Mobutu Comes to Power For 32 years, Mobutu ruled the country that he renamed Zaire. He used a combination of force, one-party rule, and gifts to supporters. Zaire had the mineral wealth and natural resources to make it one of the richest countries in Africa. It was reduced under Mobutu's rule to one of the continent's poorest. Mobutu and his associates were accused of looting the country of billions of dollars.

Mobutu successfully withstood several armed rebellions and ethnic clashes. He was finally overthrown in 1997 by Laurent Kabila after a seven-month-long civil war. On becoming president, Kabila banned all political parties. However, he promised a transition to democracy and free elections by April 1999. Such elections never came, however, and by 2000 the nation faced civil war again as three separate rebel groups sought to overthrow Kabila's autocratic rule.



CONNECT to TODAY

Zaire Again Becomes Congo

The march of Congo rebels in 1996–1997 from the eastern provinces of Zaire to the capital city of Kinshasa to overthrow Mobutu (pictured above) took only seven months. The rebels met little opposition as they crossed the country. The *New York Times* called the Zaire government “a house that had been eaten by termites. The rebels came along and pushed it over.” That is, the corruption of Mobutu's rule had undermined his support among the people.

Laurent Kabila overthrew Mobutu and had himself sworn in as president of the country on May 29, 1997. The name of the country was changed from Zaire to Congo. Mobutu died in September 1997.

Algeria Fights for Its Independence

In 1945, about 1 million French colonists and about 9 million Arab and Berber Muslims were living in the North African country of Algeria, France's principal overseas colony. Some of the colonists had lived there for generations. They were unwilling to give up their land without a fight. France claimed to offer full citizenship rights to its colonial subjects—a policy called assimilation. In reality, assimilation was hard to achieve. The colonists refused to share political power.

The Struggle The post-World War II conflict in Algeria began in 1945 when French troops fired on Algerian nationalists who were demonstrating in the town of Setif. Before peace was restored, thousands of Muslims and about 100 Europeans were killed.

In 1954, the Algerian National Liberation Front, or **FLN**, announced its intention to fight for independence. The FLN would use guerrilla tactics at home and diplomatic tactics internationally. The French sent over half a million troops into Algeria to fight the FLN. Both sides committed atrocities. European settlers in Algeria began calling for the World War II hero Charles de Gaulle to return as president of France and restore order in the French colony.

De Gaulle Takes Control De Gaulle returned to power in 1958. He soon concluded that Algeria could not be held by force. Fearful that the rebellion might spread, France let go of most of its other possessions in Africa.

In 1962, a referendum setting out the conditions for Algerian independence in cooperation with France passed with overwhelming majorities in Algeria and France. As France planned the transfer of power after the cease-fire in March 1962, 750,000 French settlers fled Algeria. Independence came in July 1962.

Ahmed Ben Bella, a leader of the FLN who had been imprisoned by the French, was named first prime minister (1962–1963) and first president (1963–1965). Ben Bella reestablished national order, began land reforms, and developed new plans for education. In 1965, he was overthrown by his chief of staff.

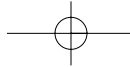
From 1965 until 1988, Algerians tried to modernize and industrialize. Their efforts were undermined when oil prices plunged in 1985–1986. Unemployment and the unfulfilled promises of the revolution contributed to an Islamic revival. Riots in 1988 against the secular government left hundreds dead. The chief Islamic party, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), won local and parliamentary elections in 1990 and 1991. However, the ruling government and army refused to accept the election results. Eventually, a civil war broke out between Islamic militants and the government—a war that continues, on and off, to this day. Efforts to restore democratic government included presidential elections

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

C. Clarifying Why did French colonists fight so hard to hold on to their land in Algeria?

Vocabulary

secular government: a government in which religious considerations are excluded from or restricted in public affairs.



in 1995 and parliamentary elections in 1997. However, these efforts excluded the FIS. Recently, there have been calls from the FIS for a truce and a national peace conference to end the violence that has claimed the lives of thousands of people.

Angola Gains Its Independence

The Portuguese had been the first Europeans to enter Africa, 400 years ago, and they were the last to leave. Portugal was unwilling to give up any of its colonies. It made no preparations for helping its colony of Angola emerge into the modern world. At the end of World War II, Angola had no education or health facilities and little commerce.

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

D. Drawing Conclusions Why might it have been so important to Portugal to hang on to Angola?

Global Impact

Cold War Reaches Angola

Picture the plight of Angola, which had suffered already from the neglect of its colonizer, Portugal. While it struggled to become a nation, Angola became a battleground in the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

From 1945 until 1991, these two countries competed with one another for economic, political, and cultural dominance around the globe. This rivalry affected their relations with nations around the world. In Africa, even U.S. friendship with Mobutu, the dictator of Zaire, was tied into the Cold War. By urging Mobutu to aid the opposition to the MPLA in Angola, the United States used him as a check against Soviet influence in Angola.

The Movement Towards Independence Still, some Angolans gained an education. Accounts of other African countries that had become independent inspired them. In the 1960s, three revolutionary groups emerged. Foreign powers supported each group.

To put down the rebels in Angola, Portugal sent in 50,000 troops. The cost of the conflict amounted to almost half of Portugal's national budget. Discontent over the colonial wars built up among the Portuguese troops until the Portuguese dictatorship in Lisbon was toppled by the military.

Civil War Follows Independence The Portuguese withdrew from Angola in 1975 without formally handing over power to anyone. The lack of preparation for independence in Angola was complicated by the Communist seizure of power. The MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) took control of the capital, Luanda. The Communist MPLA declared itself the rightful government. This led to a prolonged civil war among various rebel groups. Each group received help from outside sources. The MPLA was assisted by some 50,000 Cuban troops and by the Soviet Union. The FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola), which eventually faded away, was backed by Zaire and the United States. The major opposition to the MPLA was UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), which was assisted by South Africa and the United States.

In 1988, the United States, with a nod from the Soviet Union, pressed for a settlement among the MPLA, UNITA, South Africa, and Cuba and for the evacuation of Cuban troops. A shaky cease-fire went into effect in June 1989. In 1995, the parties began discussions about representation of each group in the government. Negotiations eventually broke down, however, and the long and bloody civil war continued on into the 2000s.

Trouble in the Middle East also prompted intervention by the United States and other powers. These efforts, too, met with mixed results, as you will learn in Section 4.

Section 3 Assessment

1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify

- Negritude movement
- Kwame Nkrumah
- Jomo Kenyatta
- Mau Mau
- Mobutu Sese Seko
- FLN
- Ahmed Ben Bella

2. TAKING NOTES

Copy the chart below on your paper. Next to each country, list an idea, an event, or a leader important to that country's history.

Ghana	
Kenya	
Zaire	
Algeria	
Angola	

3. ANALYZING MOTIVES

Why do you think that non-African nations supported certain factions that claimed power in the newly independent nations of Africa?

THINK ABOUT

- economic interests of the non-African nations
- Lumumba's request for Soviet aid in the Congo
- U.S. support of the FNLA
- the Cold War

4. ANALYZING THEMES

Revolution Why do you think revolution swept so many African nations following their independence from European rule after World War II?

THINK ABOUT

- how World War II influenced Africans
- the conditions preceding independence
- economic interests of European powers and newly independent nations