

Lesson 1: The Road to Independence and the Rise of Independent States in Africa

1. Video Lesson

2. Competencies

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- discuss the last years of European colonial rule in Africa
- identify the major impacts of colonialism on Africa.

3. Brainstorming Question

4. Why did so many African countries manage to achieve their independence in the 1960s?

5. Lesson Presentation

The Last Years of Colonial Rule and the Struggle for Independence

The national liberation movements in Africa took two courses, i.e., violent and non-violent. In West Africa, political independence was achieved with relative ease due to that West Africa had no significant number of white settlers and the nationalist movements in West Africa had a long history and relatively better experience that could enable them to provide leadership and facilitate the struggle for independence.

Gold Coast(Ghana)

In Gold Coast, the nationalist struggle was led by an extremely capable and competent leaders, namely Kwame Nkrumah. In March 1957, the Gold Coast achieved independence from British, adopting the new name Ghana.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, the nationalist struggle was led by an extremely capable and competent leaders, namely: Nnamdi Azikwe of Nigeria. Nigeria achieved independence from British in October 1960.

Guinea

In 1958, General Charles de Gaulle became French President, and a new French constitution was issued in the same year. It was planned that each colony in French West Africa would hold a referendum on the new constitution. They were to choose between voting “Yes” and becoming autonomous republics within the French Community or voting “No” and becoming immediately independent outside the French Community. The economies of the French West African colonies were highly dependent on French assistance. Only Guinea voted “No” and became fully

independent in 1958. Other colonies in French West Africa also became autonomous within the French Community.

Algeria

The French administered Algeria as part of France. In Algeria, there were large numbers of white settlers known as colons (or colonists). Therefore, the Algerian freedom fighters had to fight one of the bloodiest wars of independence not only against the French government but also the white settlers in Algeria. The Algerian War of Independence began in November 1954. The leaders of the Algerian War of Independence were mainly former soldiers of the French army and Algerians of peasant origin. One of the leaders of the struggle for independence was Ben Bella, who eventually became the first President of independent Algeria. Ben Bella and his followers first set up an organization called the Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action to Fight for Independence. This organization later changed its name to the National Liberation Front (FLN). Soon, the FLN became very strong, mainly because of the financial support it received from Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and the Arab League.