

33. African Independence Movements

In 1884 in Berlin a West Africa Conference was held. European powers, the U.S.A. and Turkey met to decide questions regarding the Congo Basin, East and Central Africa. German colonial policy was developed at that time.

In 1918 Libya, independent from Italy since Italy lost in WWI, gained its independence. ???

In 1951 the Constitutional monarchy of King Idris was recognized by the United Nations

In 1952 a revolution resulted in Egyptian independence.

In 1956 the Sudan, Tunisia and Morocco all gained independence.

In 1960, Mauritania and the Belgian Congo gained independence.

In 1961, "Arab Socialism" was accepted in Egypt.

In 1962 Algeria and Rwanda became independent.

1960 The Belgian Congo Becomes Zaire

The Congolese complained of the Belgian colonial powers, "They gave us everything but dignity."ⁱ The Belgians frequently boasted that the educational system they developed in the Congo was the best in Africa. While they did educate more Africans than other colonial powers, "for all practical purposes education in the Congo stopped virtually at the primary school level."ⁱⁱ There was not one native doctor, lawyer, engineer or scientist in the entire country after 52 years of Belgian administration. In fact, at independence the Congo had only 17 college graduates in any field.

In a belated effort to assuage the rising movement for independence, the Belgian government in 1949 published a "Ten Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the Belgian Congo." The three-volume publication began by describing the people and their needs as perceived by the colonizers. It discussed the well-being of the indigenous population in terms of food, water, housing, health, education, transportation, communication, scientific research, development of energy, agriculture and mining.ⁱⁱⁱ

1962 Algeria becomes independent

Algerian independence came at the end of an eight-year war which killed nearly a million Algerian Muslims, 3,000 French Catholic settlers, and 17,500 French troops.

ⁱ The Importance of Being Black, p. 179.

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