Unit 7

AFRICA SINCE 1960

Introduction

This unit explores the history of Africa since the 1960s, a pivotal decade marked by widespread independence movements. In 1960, often referred to as the "Year of Africa," over a dozen African nations gained independence. The unit covers the national liberation movements across various African regions, the rise of Pan-Africanism, the formation and evolution of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU), and key socio-economic and political challenges faced by post-independence African nations.

Key Terms

- **Decolonization**: The process of freeing a country from colonial rule.
- **Pan-Africanism**: A movement advocating for the solidarity and unity of African countries and peoples.
- **Guerrilla War**: A form of irregular warfare where small groups use tactics like ambushes and raids against larger, conventional forces.
- **Liberation**: The act of gaining freedom from oppression or control.
- **Nationalism**: The desire for national advancement or independence.
- **Independence**: The state of being free from outside control.

National Liberation Movements

7.1.1 North Africa

- **Egypt**: Egypt began its independence movement in the early 20th century. After World War I, the Egyptian nationalist movement, led by figures like Saad Zaghlul, pressured Britain to end its protectorate. Egypt was declared independent in 1922. Later, Sudan gained independence from the Anglo-Egyptian rule in 1956.
- **Libya**: Libya achieved independence from Italy on December 24, 1951, under UN Trusteeship.
- **Morocco and Tunisia**: Morocco and Tunisia both gained independence from France in 1956. Moroccan independence was achieved through negotiations led by Sultan Mohammed V, while Tunisia's independence was secured under the leadership of Habib Bourguiba.

- **Algeria**: The struggle in Algeria was intense, involving the National Liberation Front (FLN) and a prolonged guerrilla war against French colonial rule. Algeria achieved independence on July 1, 1962, after a referendum confirmed the desire for independence.

7.1.2 West Africa

- **British West Africa**: Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast) was the first to gain independence in 1957, led by Kwame Nkrumah. Nigeria, with its ethnically divided political parties, gained independence in 1960, followed by Sierra Leone in 1961 and Gambia in 1965.
- **French West and Equatorial Africa**: French colonies achieved independence in 1960, except Guinea, which gained independence in 1958 after rejecting France's proposed new political structure.
- **Portuguese West Africa**: Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Angola, and Mozambique faced prolonged and violent struggles, with independence achieved in the early 1970s and 1980s.

7.1.3 East and Central Africa

- **British East Africa**: Uganda gained independence in 1962, Tanganyika in 1961, and Kenya in 1963, following the suppression of the Mau Mau uprising and subsequent political negotiations.
- **Belgian Congo**: The Congo, led by Patrice Lumumba, achieved independence on June 30, 1960. The early years were marked by secessionist struggles and internal conflict.
- **Rwanda and Burundi**: These territories, under Belgian mandate, gained independence in 1962. Rwanda became a republic, and Burundi transitioned from a kingdom to a republic in 1966.

7.1.4 Southern Africa

- **British and Portuguese Colonies**: Zambia and Malawi gained independence in 1964, followed by Lesotho and Botswana in 1966. Zimbabwe (formerly South Rhodesia) achieved independence in 1980 after a prolonged guerrilla war.
- **Namibia**: After years of South African rule, Namibia gained independence in 1990 following a long struggle led by SWAPO and international pressure.

7.1.5 Apartheid in South Africa

- **Apartheid**: The system of racial segregation and discrimination enforced by the Afrikaner National Party starting in 1948. The African National Congress (ANC) led a struggle against apartheid, culminating in Nelson

Mandela's election as South Africa's first black president in 1994, marking the end of apartheid.

Pan-Africanism and the Organization of African Unity (OAU)

Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism is a movement advocating for the unity and solidarity of African people and the African diaspora. Originating in the 18th and 19th centuries in response to colonial exploitation and oppression, it seeks to unify people of African descent globally. The movement gained significant momentum with the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in October 1945, where African delegates focused on the liberation of colonized Africa. Key figures like Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta emerged as leaders in the struggle for independence, leading their nations towards liberation.

Kwame Nkrumah, in particular, played a crucial role in African unity. He was instrumental in forming the Union of African States (Ghana–Guinea–Mali Union) in 1958, which, though short-lived, was a step towards regional cooperation. Despite its disbandment in 1963, Nkrumah's vision for a united Africa continued to influence future efforts.

The Casablanca and Monrovia Groups

As Africa moved towards independence, there was a division among leaders regarding the future of African unity:

- **Casablanca Group**: Formed by Ghana, Guinea, Egypt, Mali, Morocco, Libya, and the Algerian government-in-exile. This group advocated for a strong political union with a centralized economic plan, continental defense, and cultural restoration.
- **Monrovia Group**: Comprised of former French colonies and other African states like Nigeria, Ethiopia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. This group preferred a loose confederation of independent states with voluntary cooperation in cultural and economic areas.

The two groups were divided over the level of integration, with the Casablanca Group supporting a more centralized approach and the Monrovia Group favoring a decentralized model.

Formation of the OAU

In May 1963, despite these divisions, African leaders came together in Addis Ababa to establish the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The OAU's main

objectives were to end colonialism and apartheid, promote African unity, coordinate development efforts, safeguard sovereignty, and foster international cooperation.

Successes and Failures of the OAU

Successes:

- **Decolonization**: The OAU played a significant role in ending colonial rule and white minority regimes in Africa.

Failures:

- **Lack of Peace and Stability**: The OAU struggled to address internal and external conflicts, poor governance, human rights abuses, and economic issues. Its influence was limited, and it could not effectively tackle the challenges facing African nations.

In response to these shortcomings, the African Union (AU) was established in 2002, replacing the OAU to address these issues more effectively.

Key Issues Post-Independence

- **Economic Challenges**: Rapid population growth, international debt, and climatic conditions have impeded economic development.
- **Ethnic Conflicts**: Post-colonial borders and ethnic tensions have led to civil wars and conflicts, such as the Nigerian Civil War and the Rwandan Genocide.
- **Poverty**: Factors like inadequate infrastructure, disease, and war have exacerbated poverty levels across the continent.

Current Trends

Despite challenges, Africa has seen democratic reforms and progress. By the 1990s, many countries transitioned from single-party or military rule to democratic governance, marking a new phase of political development.

Conclusion

Pan-Africanism and the OAU were pivotal in the fight against colonialism and the promotion of African unity. While the OAU achieved significant successes in decolonization, it struggled with internal and external challenges, leading to its replacement by the AU. Understanding these historical developments provides insight into Africa's ongoing efforts toward unity and development.