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# Anti-Colonial Nationalism and Patriotism in Sub-Saharan Africa

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## Abstract and Keywords

Following on from the argument of the joint introduction to African nationalism, this chapter emphasizes Africa's place in a global history of nationalism by emphasizing what seems to be a universal instinct to search out instructive history in order either to ride modernity's adventure or to face up to its ordeal. The early scholarly analysis of African nationalism assumed that colonialism's allegedly modernizing history was the past that counted, with nationalist elites riding the tide of social change that consigned 'tribal loyalty' to the past. Scholars are now more aware of deeper African pasts that made Africans see colonialism as less of an adventure, more of an ordeal, especially for deep-rooted ideas of household self-mastery as the basis of African citizenships. This archive of political thought encouraged local ethnic patriotisms in which the lively constitutional histories of African kingdoms, and the sense of ethnic moral economies outraged by class formation. Territorial nationalisms were shaped as much by such local energies as by demands for unity against colonial rule. Such contradictions could be at their most severe in southern Africa, as liberation movements had to take up arms against entrenched white minorities. African nationalisms, in short, have been shaped as much by African history as by imported ideas.

Keywords: Constitutional history, household self-mastery, instructive history, liberation movements, modernity, moral ethnicity, nationalism, patriotism, political thought, political tribalism

# African Nationalism in World History

THOMAS Hodgkin, an early analyst, never doubted that Africa belonged to world history. Discarding the preconceptions of imperial historiography and Western conventional wisdom, he saw African nationalism as ‘the final stage of a chain-reaction’ that the French Revolution had initiated by translating the rights of man into the rights of nations. African movements might be ‘mixed up’, with differing levels and aims—for workers’ rights, peasant freedoms, religious liberty, tribal welfare, nation-statehood, or pan-African union—but so too were other nationalisms.[2] Hodgkin conceded that his views lacked historical perspective. We think we know more African history now. Paradoxically, this enables a still deeper global comparison. Our joint introduction argued that European nationalisms sought to tame modernity by recourse to an imagined history of a new community, the nation. Modernity was just as shocking to Africa; Africans had the same desire for instructive, often evasive, history, to restore in societies divided by new opportunities and dangers some sense of moral community.

When and how does one choose a vigilant history that entitles one to have a fabled moral economy restored? George Orwell answered both questions when, under aerial bombardment in 1941, he argued that England must turn socialist to survive. Class division was fatal in the crisis of war; revolution would also make the English ‘more ourselves not less’; England would ‘still be England’. Orwell thought patriotism stemmed from public concern for an honourable history under threat. But whose (p. 319) history did he choose? England’s, not Britain’s.[3] In old countries clustered memories of buried nations offer a choice of potential sovereignties to raise from the dead.[4] In new countries, as in Africa, these memories lie in shallower graves.

This chapter’s argument depends on a distinction between patriotism and nationalism. By ‘patriotism’, a slippery term, I mean what Obafemi Awolowo called, in terms Orwell would recognize, a ‘searching…self-examination’ to ensure that self-rule respects the rights historically won by citizens, typically household heads in Africa.[5] Each sub-Saharan colony comprised many previously self-governing localities, what Léopold Senghor of Senegal called *patries*. Modern African patriotisms were bound to be local before ‘national’. If, as Ernest Renan thought, nations need to get their history wrong, so too do Africa’s localities, since they too, in a continent forever on the move, have plural pasts. Take Asante, built, like Europe’s kingdoms, by war and migration. Its local chiefs promised self-restraint as a condition of justice: Not to chase women, nor get drunk, nor, crucially, to disclose the origins of their subjects, fearful of discrimination against strangers.[6] Patriotism is self-searching, nationalism seeks sovereignty. Nationalisms—coalitions of energized patriotisms or class-interests with disputed expectations of sovereignty—have good reason for imagined, inclusive, pasts.

When and how are patriotic pasts chosen south of the Sahara? Any old past will not do; to address crisis it has to convince. The African recourse to plausibly deserving or harrowing histories that Hodgkin could not know, born in the moral crisis of colonialism, may pull African nationalism back into scholarly examination, up through historiography’s trapdoor. Orwell’s thoughts on continuity, choice, and change are best focused, first, on

Ethiopia, under alien rule for less than a decade. Its 1974 revolution, like the French, was a national adventure; it was also a patriotic ordeal, provoking ethnic awakenings in response, like later, nineteenth-century European nationalisms.

In 1963 the continent's new rulers founded the Organization of African Unity in Emperor Haile Selassie's capital, Addis Ababa. Some, when young, had made an equally quixotic pan-African gesture, condemning Italy's Ethiopian conquest. African Christianity had long been intrigued by the psalmist's vision of an Ethiopia reaching out to God. Some Ethiopians call their Christianity the oldest, conceived by the Queen of Sheba in Solomon's bed. When West Africans needed national histories they exhumed dead empires, Ghana and Mali. Liberation movements later resurrected the equally vanished glories of Zimbabwe or Azania. Ethiopia was an African exception, the real thing, a nation since antiquity and, with its sense of divine election as a second Israel, living proof of Africa's central place in world history.

Ethiopia is a nation by many criteria, with a continuous history since the fourth century CE; a line of 'Solomonic' dynasties chronicled in writing; a national Church with a common geography and calendar of pilgrimage; a peripatetic court that at times ruled its provinces while its aristocratic, Amharic, culture embraced ambitious provincials. By 1900 Ethiopia looked like an early-modern European kingdom. Its 'new monarchy' had defeated an earlier Italian invasion. Joining the African scramble, its Amharic core had won a polyglot empire. After 1945 Haile Selassie reinforced his central power against noble banditry and invited missionaries to expand provincial (p. 320) education. In 1974 he suffered the reforming despot's common fate, being deposed by the army, his autocracy's chosen servant, at a time of famine and peasant revolt. 'Trees that are planted,' he reflected, 'do not always bear the desired fruit.'[7]

Ethiopia's revolution was as terrible as any. But Orwell might well have observed that its Amharic core was still Ethiopia. The revolutionaries saw their Marxism as a patriotic path to global modernity, as messianic as the Orthodox Church, the more durable world-historical symbol they also co-opted. Ethiopia was changing nonetheless. Peasants found refuge from revolution in local patriotisms; Soviet nationality theory taught the regime, similarly, that Ethiopia was a multinational state. But the country's current 'ethnic federalism' also owes much to the emperor's earlier reforms. While the Orthodox Church had a national Bible, missionaries made vernacular translations. To non-Amhara the Bible was as modern as Karl Marx. If new nations elsewhere were imagined as moral narratives in a secularizing age, many Africans have found in the Bible an enchanted new gateway to political possibility.

Scripture has often served as a primer in nationhood; the groaning children of Israel, freed slaves, provide the global prototype. That image, previously confined to core Ethiopia, now multiplied in its provinces. Oromo, 40 per cent of the population, more numerous than Amhara, had not previously seen themselves as one people. In 1993 one of their Christians, Mathewos Ciibasa, remembered: 'When I was a young man my only ambition was to become an Amhara. But then I came across the Oromo Bible. Realizing

that God talked to me in my own language surprised me with joy, and changed my ambition completely.'[8] Ethiopia ceased to be an exception, if not for that reason alone, joining the rest of Africa, and Britain, in possessing not one but several patriotisms, potential nationalisms.

Educated Oromo imagined a novel but credible past, history as a national ordeal. Their patriotism justified their strange new privilege, literacy. They taught that Ethiopian conquest, helped by turncoat Oromo who became Amhara, had brought tyranny; that their historic social ties, imagined as kinship and inscribed in land, had been broken by imperial and then revolutionary expropriations. They catalogued folk culture, disputed their language's orthography, and called for restoration of what they thought they had lost, a pastoral democracy disciplined by ritual observance, generational cycles of power, and egalitarian moral economy—unlike rapacious Amhara aristocracy.

Africa, then, has its place among nationalisms. Ethiopia's revolutionaries welcomed modernity's adventure, its provincial patriots resented history's ordeal. Yet we must still free ourselves from the teleology that foretells uniform nationhood, an increasing rarity. Contingency is a better guide. Oromo, like Europeans, asked how to protect household honour and unequal personal obligation against impersonal markets rigged by arbitrary rule. Their answer remains a work in progress. African nationalism deserves comparison not with idealized Western outcomes but with that universal response to crisis, the demand for a history to instruct the future.

In the 1960s Europeans thought colonial rule had imported such history to Africa—history as enlightened social change. Its private beneficiaries, the new elites, appeared (p. 321) to pursue modernity as public purpose. Patrice Lumumba, ill-fated first prime minister of the ex-Belgian Congo, agreed that political parties were extra-mural classes in citizenship.[9] Such shallow history continues to dismiss African nationalism as a modernizing project that failed. But there are deeper, African, histories to consider. Their patriotic potential has not yet failed. Africans continue to ask how the renewal of past moral economies might infuse their states with nationhood.

To substantiate that thesis I first recall the hopes thrice raised by African nationalism, then argue that colonial rule was widely experienced as an ordeal. In response, Africans often imagined historically argumentative, internal, moral ethnicities. Too often these became rival political tribalisms in the competition for state power. Such intrinsically African contradictions shaped nationalist visions of the future.

# Times of Hope

African nationalism first raised realistic hope, not necessarily for nation states, after the Second World War. Modern African political thought had initially been Pan-African; in 1945 a fifth Pan-African Congress still looked to a cohesive continent.[10] Britain and

France also believed in closer union for many of their colonies. Britain hoped that East and Central African federations would, upon their wider stage, heal the racial conflicts that separately baffled each colony of white and Asian settlement. Africans refused to solve Britain's settler problems in this way but francophone leaders, familiar with federations, were as keen as their rulers to dissolve colonialism into a multinational French Community, not into nation states. Shared citizenship and employment rights were preferable to separate pauper sovereignties.

Nation states resulted, all the same. Few officials imagined any alternative, for power shapes rulers and it was most visible in each colony, even in federal French Africa. It also shapes subjects; their local deals put paid to Pan-African dreams. Further, as Europeans tried to 'develop' their colonies, to pay for post-war recovery with African exports, African electoral competition developed faster still. For development demanded a new politics. Indirect rule through local chiefs had kept people quiet; 'partnership' with urban professionals would get things done. In French and British Africa, new universities proved the earnest gradualism of this hope, as did cautious increases in electorates and legislators. Anxious 'to stand well in the eyes of the world'—the interfering United Nations—and 'to deserve well of the colonial peoples' (better than the Soviet Union), Britain knew 'development from above' needed support 'from below'. Nationalism, the only apparent source of popular energy, must therefore be steered into 'constructive courses' short of independence.[11] But reform had its usual unintended outcome, creating 'legal channels for organizing the expulsion of the colonial power'.[12] Like Haile Selassie, colonial rulers were ousted by their favourite clients—or their clients' more impatient rivals.

(p. 322) So, in 1951, Kwame Nkrumah became 'leader of government business' in the Gold Coast (Ghana), British Africa's 'model colony', with a cocoa-funded prosperity apparently assured. Nkrumah had six years of dyarchy, shared power, ahead of him, a brief enough training in self-rule before independence. By 1961 the calendar was shorter still, when the British let Tanganyika (mainland Tanzania) go two years after Julius Nyerere won his first general election. Tanganyika had no better prospects than Ghana; to the contrary, London saw no point in clinging to a territory that would always be poor. Why antagonize a still-friendly nationalism and land Britain with costs better borne by Africans? The French and even the unbending Belgians had gone, and Britain recoiled from bearing the increasing odium of colonialism alone (Portugal did not seem to care).

Development planning had dwindled, in a decade, to an admission that to leave was better than to stay. Britain's hopes were always qualified by the prudent proviso, first stated of an earlier model colony, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), that 'giving too much and too soon' was 'wiser than giving too little and too late'.[13] Hopes were foiled and prudence fortified when development, far from attracting support, provoked protest against its intimate intrusions and social divisions. It was more like a second colonial occupation, with little to show for it. By 1960, too, Africa was no longer so useful; Europe had recovered from war; the Anglo-French Suez fiasco of 1956 shattered any illusion that empire was the answer

to American or Soviet power. France also came to fear the costs of its worldwide Union, and reduced its commitments south of the Sahara in order to concentrate, vainly, on keeping Algeria French.

In the end, France and Britain had to trust to what a governor called the only guard dogs in their late-colonial kennels, the nationalists with most votes. Feeding them concessions would keep them friendly.[14] In 1960 the wreck of the Belgian Congo, abandoned in panic, showed the alternative. The least one could ask, to depart in good order, without 'scuttle', had become for Britain and France their highest aspiration.

Visiting scholars remained hopeful a little longer than departing rulers. While veering from David Apter's early enthusiasm to Aristide Zolberg's later concern, political scientists focused on elites for whom modernity was a voyage of discovery, nationalism the compass, and a 'mass' party their vessel. Social change, opening up closed tribal worlds, encouraged political daring. Riding history's tide, nationalists nevertheless still had work to do for few Africans were 'moderns'; most remained 'traditionals'. In between, pilgrim 'transitionals' looked for satisfactions that no supposedly decaying tribe could offer. As cultural brokers, nationalists must 'mobilize' and 'integrate' these transitionals politically, to defeat patron parties reliant on 'residual' tribal loyalties. Earlier protests had been riotously religious or tribally reactionary; mass parties, reassuringly rational, co-opted those voluntary associations and trade unions whose members had taken a first step in modernity by breaking their tribal bonds. A party's bravura, its press and rallies, inspired by a leader's charisma, could stamp progressive purpose on social flux. State patronage, finally, would discipline party machines.

(p. 323) This summary of the era's more buoyant analyses suggests that many scholars saw nationalism as a tribute to Europe's civilizing mission. Blindness to racial subjection could be startling. In 1921, as one might expect of a retired British proconsul, Lord Lugard had claimed that Egyptian and Indian nationalisms were inspired by their British tuition in freedom: 'Their very discontent [was] a measure of their progress.' But thirty years later a senior American scholar almost agreed: African nationalism was the 'inevitable end product of the impact of Western imperialism and modernity'. The historians Ronald Robinson and Jack Gallagher summed up: in jointly engineering a world revolution, nationalism was 'the continuation of imperialism by other means'.[15]

Radical scholars saw continuity as defeat. Frantz Fanon scorned colonialism's 'spoilt children', bartering freedom 'around a green baize table'.[16] Parties had created not citizens but middle classes who, as rulers, feared the masses they had roused but not fed. Without the colonial's security of a pensioned passage home, they bought insurance by splitting public goods with their ethnic clients. One-party regimes, coalitions in jobbery for a spineless class, the petite bourgeoisie, aspired to no more than neo-colonial dependence. Their citizens had no sturdier vision to offer. Largely self-employed, they lacked a class perspective. Where then was patriotic sinew to be found?

Armies seemed the next best bet. Officers seemed natural patriots, of many ethnicities but with one *esprit de corps*. It was not as simple as that. East Africa's armies entered politics as armed trade unionists; Nigeria's fell murderously apart along ethnic fault-lines widened by uneven access to colonial education. Only Ghana's soldiers lived up to expectations, marching back to barracks after reintroducing multi-party politics to a country tired of autocratic people's democracy. But they had unusually seasoned allies. An older generation of professionals and chiefs, roughly treated by Nkrumah, was there to revive an earlier, less plebeian, power. Other armies—which made, or attempted, over thirty coups in the 1960s—fell into the factions that divided their civil societies. Professional soldiers lost their shine.

In a third time of hope scholars turned to scruffier guerrillas preparing people's war against the Portuguese, Rhodesia, and South Africa. Fanon thought common struggle would hammer tribes into a nation, then nerve citizens to send their rulers 'to school with the people'.[17] Amilcar Cabral of Portuguese Guinea, agronomist turned guerrilla leader, was not so sure. Peasants were unlikely revolutionaries; political will, not class struggle, was the key. Basil Davidson, taught by his Yugoslav experience, agreed that partisan war did not inevitably liberate. The popular support guerrillas needed could be secured as well by terror as by argument. Intimidation of the unpersuaded was likely to mature into oppression when power was won. Until history decided that issue most scholars gave guerrilla nationalisms the benefit of the doubt. Their violence seemed justified by colonial rule, now seen less as an adventure, more as an ordeal.

## (p. 324) Colonial Ordeals

If colonial rule was the crucible of nationalism, it was also a period of African history. Europeans counted Africans into named, taxable, ‘tribes’ with chargeable leaders. Africans fought this ‘documentary bullying’[18] with history. This often set household honour, sustained by more or less unequal bargains with neighbours and patrons, against the unlawful, anti-social, violence of any greater power. Such patriotic thought, as constitutional as it was ethnic, could question its ideological contemporary, territorial nationalism, as much as their joint enemy, alien rule.

Before 1880 more Africans lived in small societies, more of the time, than under states. Few in population, they tolerated powers that protected household self-mastery within local moral economies of unequal reputation. Land was abundant; legitimate wealth lay in attracting people. By marriage, trade, and clientage, household clusters enlisted strangers with useful skills and connections, so that the ‘House’, a ‘coalition of capacities’[19] assembled by a ‘big man’, was as much the basis of society as lineage. Africa’s internal frontiers allowed this composite mobility; frontier authority was argued between first-comers, knowing the land, and later arrivals claiming military or judicial expertise. These ideological politics could generate ethnic communities; some ‘tribal’ names are centuries old. Other groups were as transient as their big-man leaders, and language use was generally too fluid to demarcate ‘others’. However porous many of these past borders of belonging may once have been, later patriots, like Orwell, romanticized them as cradles of moral economy now in crisis.

Africans were scarce and slippery subjects; kings often had to enslave strangers to get work done. History could also be cruel. Famine, a regular visitor in some parts, could force the free to submit to the strong. Some strength seemed atrocious. Origin myths, disclosing political theory, portray drunken, incestuous, or inhuman kings who sacrificed children, practised sorcery or, in religious coups, sanctified patronage into prerogative. Often seen as cruelly protective leopards, kings might also be fathers, masters but providers who ‘divided the leopard-skin’.[20] Africans understood this paradox of power: To exist, power must be greedy, eating its subjects’ substance; to work, it must be generous, sharing its fruits with allies or conditionally with clients. Rulers try to build disciplined power but states also take vulgar forms, as personal ambition seeks political protection and public office serves private ends. These dynamics of state-building and formation troubled colonial governors as much as kings. Ghana’s Akan peoples compare power to an egg. Held too tight, it breaks, as in Haile Selassie’s grip in 1974; too loosely, and it drops, as from colonial fingers after 1945.

Colonial rule was in some ways as weak as earlier African states. But it could be revolutionary: literates found opportunity; new urban frontiers freed others from rural dependence. It was certainly disruptive: peace tempted households to cut their protective

‘House’ or lineage obligations; slaves worked out a less slavish dependence. And it was reactionary, building more intrusive states that allowed more predatory power (p. 325) to form. Such ambiguity spelt moral dilemmas, but whether more than before, who can say?

Africans looked not to residual loyalties for comfort but to demanding moral economies for guidance. To whom was duty now owed, at what cost, for whose benefit, in a situational calculus of new identities, religious, occupational, and political? In rethinking themselves as men and women few *remained* ‘tribal’; most *became* more ethnically aware. Given other possible solidarities, the rights, duties, and protections of ethnicity had to be keenly argued, a moral ethnicity.[21] Literacy clarified the essentially constitutional issues. As among the Oromo, writers called up ethnic publics, often in return for the school fees their localities had paid for them as an investment in power. Since the 1850s pioneer literates have been, above all, historians. As Africans, they rebutted white assumptions of prehistoric savagery. As patriots, they showed ‘their people’ how past civic virtue could be undefeated by modernity. Print poured from writing circles which read their Bible or Qur’an, Racine or Shakespeare. This wordy history is central to our case. Of theories of imperialism the most relevant observes that whites ruled this least alluring, last invaded, continent ‘on a shoestring’.[22] The price for Africans, in subjection, household conflict, and social unease, was not so cheap.

Subjection spelt dislocation, not reasoned modernization. Whites tried a succession of African agents in their seventy short years of rule. To build the power to change Africa, they first promoted the new men who emerged in the politics of conquest: Christian or Muslim literates, ex-sergeants, head porters. These pursued their own interests, sometimes provoking rebellion. Officials then tried alliance with ‘traditional chiefs’, thought to represent the cohesive tribes in which whites believed Africans to live. Conservative collaboration would build consent by borrowing ‘the substance of ruling authority’ from their subjects.[23] This ‘indirect rule’ failed too. Officials expected more energy than chiefs thought wise; chiefs exacted more profit than officials approved. The 1930s depression forced further reform; African poverty served no one. After 1945 governors tried to build a progressive partnership with lawyers and businessmen. These, vulgarizing power in turn, converted council membership into party leadership. In a dialectic of state-building and formation, sceptical officials had shuffled a series of insecure elites, each privately insuring against public removal in some future crisis.

Household conflict was broader than elite anxiety. Colonial ‘gatekeeper states’ did what little was needed to open the gates of export growth.[24] Until minimal welfare provision and trade-union rights were conceded after 1945, increasingly autonomous households bore all the costs of change. These could be unexpectedly intimate. In one region farming couples found they could not sleep together after officials tidied up seasonally shifting habitats.[25] To lower tax liability polygynists cut down on their huts and privacy. With men often absent, sometimes under coercion, working on the roads, on plantations or down the mine, women bore many of the burdens of export growth. Where farming prospered, land’s rising value hurt its social ties. ‘Cocoa’, a Gold Coast grower complained, ‘destroys kinship and divides blood.’[26] Migrant labour could seem equally pernicious. In return for

filial duty young men had looked to fathers for their (p. 326) marriage portion. Now they could invest in a more individual adulthood by disloyal wage-labour for others. ‘That plough is now his wife!’, a Kikuyu father cried in disowning a returning son.[27] From the equator to the Cape, seniors accused lost youth of absconding from domestic discipline to the moral idleness of town.

Demographic change caused more unease. Never numerous, Africans lost millions to the disruption and plagues of conquest, an agonizing time that lasted until ‘Spanish’ influenza completed the Great War’s imperial havoc. After 1920 population growth and urbanization were still more disturbing. Rising numbers of impatient youth made nationalism, in part, a generational revolt.

Social relations became more uncertain. Alliances between white officials and African patrons devalued clients. Market women made men anxious. Witchcraft fears flourished. These were not new, especially for women in polygynous households, but there were signs of a novel, capitalist, unease; urban elites began to fear rural envy. Jomo Kenyatta, who wrote instructive history for ‘[his] people of Gikuyu’ before ruling all Kenya, mourned that ‘in place of a unified tribal morality…a Gikuyu does not know what he may or may not, ought or ought not, to do or believe…’.[28] Moralized ethnicities entangled one in deeper pasts than a shared, trans-ethnic, history of colonial pain. Even educated elites were scarcely ‘transitional’ between tradition and modernity, a false dichotomy masking plural identities.

‘Development’ intensified intimate disquiet. Officials, keen to raise production but fearing ecological degradation, invaded the household domain. New rules of husbandry and land-tenure reforms threatened both self-mastery and the multiple rights of usage through which mutual obligation had been expressed. Commercial farmers found their export earnings creamed off in forced loans to support imperial currencies or diversify local economies. Late colonialism’s crises were rural, not urban. In the 1950s urban and rural anger joined in armed insurgency only in Cameroun and Kenya. Elsewhere, legalized industrial relations appeased anger at wartime inflation; and cities acquired housing finance. Moreover, no colony had a national economy that might create national interests. Rural capitalism and agrarian regimentation, to the contrary, divided people. Politicians often had to catch up with rural discontents before using them. The ‘masses’ had often mobilized themselves, but behind a myriad local patriotisms.

# Patriotism and Nationalism

‘Become masters in your own home.’ West African activists roused audiences with this call. To Kenya’s trade-union leader, Tom Mboya, independence meant that ‘it is we who can open or close the door’.[29] Who closes the door is master in his home. The boldest Tanganyikan newspaper in the 1940s was *Kwetu* [*Our Home*]. *Uhuru* meant a householder’s freedom, distinct from slavery, *utumwa*, before it meant national

independence. In southern Africa guerrillas killed witches and prostitutes, both threats to (p. 327) household fertility. Across Africa, nationalists promised to restore what patriotism demanded: masculine mastery over fertile wealth. Promise did not always meet demand.

Much depended on context, best differentiated by asking why, in 1957, Ghana (the Gold Coast) became the first new sub-Saharan nation. The answer lies in strategic geography, economy, education, historical continuity, the politics of conquest, religious regionalism, and imperial policy. In West Africa, not the settler-dominated East, Ghana's petty-capitalist (not 'peasant') economy profited African households. Its educated elites pre-dated colonialism as also, to an unusual extent, did its borders. Its largest kingdom was a conquered country. Its Muslim interior was small. It was British.

Ghana had neither settlers nor a port 'east of Suez'; imperial strategists could rest easy. Conversely, as the world's leading cocoa growers, its commoners could afford to pay for politics, attacking chiefs' privileges and European monopolies. Inland French Africa was poorer; eastern Africa's profits went to immigrant employers. The pre-colonial origins of Ghana's educated elites also meant, as in Senegal, Nigeria, and South Africa, that conquest came as a racial insult; their pained self-interest created a single, potentially national, public sphere early enough for a younger generation to outflank their seniors' moderation. Ghana's Convention People's Party (CPP) was the pushy plebeian prototype. In East Africa schooling had barely preceded conquest; nationalist leaders, often pioneer literates to whom alien rule had brought opportunity, saw in popular unrest a fissile threat as much as a unifying spur.

Ghana also enjoyed a rare degree of cultural commonality. Its borders encased similar Akan kingdoms, of which the strongest, Asante, enjoyed little of the official favour that elsewhere fractured national politics; the British had fought Asante too often. The Muslim interior was too small to delay independence, to catch up with the mission-schooled south, unlike Nigeria's 'big North'. Finally, while urban Senegalese, French citizens since the 1870s, had sent a black deputy to Paris in 1914, British colonies were autonomous. Africans first entered the Gold Coast legislature in 1850 but never Westminster. They fought their first, limited, elections in 1928; and from 1946 enjoyed an African majority. Once decolonization was on the cards nationhood was trumps. Nkrumah's pan-Africanism was fantasy; no French-style wider Union was on offer. The British were less centralized than the French, not more liberal. In settler-dominated British East Africa the first African legislator was nominated, not yet elected, as late as 1944. Belgium and Portugal permitted still fewer freedoms, while white minorities had ruled South Africa since 1910 and Southern Rhodesia since 1923.

Local patriotisms affected territorial nationalisms still more than imperial policy and in three different ways. Old kingdoms competed, variously, with new nationhoods. 'Republican' discontents in stateless societies alarmed some nationalisms and inspired

others. Southern liberation movements could suppress or respect ethnic or regional difference.

The colonial politics of monarchy reinterpreted past constitutional relations between royal, religious, noble, and commoner ‘estates’. In a rising scale of harm to nation-statehood, Nigeria’s emirates have held sway, but in a country few ever saw as one (p. 328) nation; Zulu history was less dangerous to South Africa than Asante’s to Ghana; Buganda’s populism denied peace to Uganda; Rwanda’s kingdom was consumed in fire, blood, and referendum. Colonial histories certainly mattered: Nigeria’s emirs had joined with the British against a more militant Islam that endangered both; Zulu and Asante were both conquered and had had rebellions crushed; Buganda was Britain’s strongest local ally; Rwanda’s aristocracy enjoyed most colonial support. But for anxious householders their own imagined constitutional history could weigh still more.

There were over 30 million Nigerians in 1960; their nationalism was inevitably plural. The British feared secession by the northern region, 60 per cent of the population, but its aristocratic Islam was not Nigeria’s most incisive patriotism. Cultural stereotypes, shaping householder hopes, will have to do. In the west the Yoruba expected much of patrons: ‘the elder who eats all his food [not considering his dependants] will carry his load by himself’. Inequality was starker in the north, not only for women, but brides were warned, ‘Resign yourself, patient girl. Marriage is an ill you can’t revenge. Only death will bring relief.’ The chiefless Igbo of the east valued equality of honour above all: a tortoise in a folk tale persuades a leopard to let him scratch up the ground before being killed, so that passers-by may later say, ‘yes, a fellow and his match struggled here’. To explain Nigeria’s federated political vigour one must appreciate not only elite Islamic hegemony over the northern poor but also Yoruba ‘big man’ competition for prosperous dependants and the republican energy of Igbo ‘fighting each other with schools’,[30] whose educated young, like the Scots, left their poor soils to seek the waged road to adulthood all over Nigeria, to others’ growing alarm.

Leaders personified regions. The Yoruba Obafemi Awolowo financed his legal studies in London as a businessman. Ahmadu Bello, lordly war-captain to the Sultan of Sokoto, shared northern leadership with Abukakr Tafawa Balewa, son of a slave who, in this most bureaucratic case of indirect rule, had profited from the education given to able servants. Nnamdi Azikiwe, typically Igbo, culturally Nigerian, followed his civil servant father’s career around the colony, gained confidence at an American university and then a journalist’s wider vision. Contrasting histories informed their politics. Awolowo had read Samuel Johnson, Christian historian of a redeemed Yoruba nation, and entered Nigerian politics by founding an ethnic cultural association. Global, not national, history reminded Bello and Balewa that faithful Muslims had survived infidel conquest ever since the Mongols entered Baghdad; northern workers similarly trusted in Islamic rather than Nigerian or proletarian rights. Azikiwe’s Igbo, unable to agree on a standard vernacular, wrote history as a multiple ‘hometown’ contest in modernity, not as an ethnic saga. Awolowo, by contrast, hoped federalism would protect the local accountability proper to

ethnic patriotism.[31] In the event, each regional government suppressed minority voices, to strengthen its hand at the centre. The northern emirates have merely been the most ruthless in this regional competition.

Thirty years after Nigeria's independence the Zulu people, heirs to a kingdom and South Africa's largest language group, seemed ready to outdo Nigeria's northern separatism. The threat vanished in 1994 when Nelson Mandela became South Africa's first black president, not because Zulu lacked 'residual tribal loyalty' but because how to (p. 329) become Zulu was so hotly argued. In the 1820s Shaka Zulu had defeated other Nguni-speakers to build his kingdom. Modernity was just as divisive as this memory. White domination raised hard questions. Zulu Christianity, fount of patriotic debate, offered different answers, divided between a royal establishment, Africanist intellectuals, and a popular 'independency', in which a prophetic Church saw white rule as punishment for past royal violence, as sinful as that of Israel's King Saul. Migrant labour weakened households to similarly divisive effect. An emergent middle class sponsored football, not chieftaincy; workers retained respect for monarchy when learning class solidarity. White policy had reduced Zulu kingship to a cipher by the 1950s, but it was apartheid's separation of rural local government from the fragile privileges of townspeople that finally split Zulus between the hierarchical Inkatha Freedom Party and the urban, more democratic, African National Congress (ANC). Conservative and progressive patriotisms can be the bitterest enemies.

This was true of all South Africans as apartheid fought to survive. In the 1940s Afrikaner nationalists had hoped to unify their *volk*, against English-speakers as much as Africans, through the disciplines of rule and privileges of apartheid. By the 1970s the 'loyal resistance' among intellectuals, churchmen, and big businessmen believed, after searching self-examination (to recall Awolowo) that the *volk* could survive with justice only by replacing apartheid's separate freedoms with freedom for all in a plural society. Afrikaners debated political morality in print; Africans had to settle their differences on the streets. Zulu fought Zulu as well as strangers, in part over how to practise true manhood at a time of trial. Argument between Xhosa-speakers also intensified, following two centuries of mutual disdain between 'reds' who herded the household cattle and 'schools' who absconded to town. Those yet to achieve adult responsibility now felt their elders had betrayed it. Complaining that the latter preferred beer to freedom, 'comrades' washed out drinkers' mouths with soap.[32] Outraged moral ethnicity can provoke more intimate violence than political tribalism.

The conflict between Nkrumah's CPP, strongest in Ghana's southern kingdoms and Atlantic ports, and the inland Asante's National Liberation Movement (NLM), shows, similarly, how history can divide those with customs more or less in common. In 1956 the NLM's federal demand made the British hesitate over Ghana's unitary future. Yet party and movement had similar leaders, second- or third-generation professionals, critical of their gentlemanly elders; CPP defectors had created the NLM. Both attracted urban crowds, cocoa-growers, and businessmen for whom politics was an investment. Both engaged with similar chieftaincy politics, in which chiefly houses competed to protect

ancestral mysteries and communal property, advised by rich, high-born, elders. Well-connected commoners, 'youngmen' or *nkwankwaa*, could press for unpopular chiefs to be 'destooled'; in Asante they had led 'republican' revolt against a tyrannous *Asantehene*, their king, in 1883. Christianity and cocoa added to their discontents. Some came to deplore their chiefs' mysteries; more resented their market prerogatives. 'Destoolment' became as common in Asante as elsewhere, and Asantes supported the CPP's drive to end 'tribal feudalism', a radicalization of British plans for local (p. 330) government reform. So why did Asante's 'youngmen' turn against the party? In short, cocoa and citizenship.

Producing the most cocoa, Asante became a resentful region, over-taxed by the state's monopoly cocoa marketing board and under-represented. But what made region a nation? Asantes would say they had always been a nation. A manifesto exclaimed: 'Save the Ashanti Nation for it has History.'[33] This history forced commoners to fight for self-mastery. In the past, belonging to one of the kingdom's matrilineal clans had made them citizens, not slaves. The NLM now contrasted a citizen's fruitful toil with the new slavery, subjection to Nkrumah's dictatorship. But citizenship needed constant assertion in 'a dynamic of participatory inequality', within 'a relational web of lives' rooted in Asante's past, not in the Ghanaian party. Arguments about status could reach two centuries back, to Asante's origins; 'the past remain[ed] in the ears'. In the 'marketplace of power' one traded history, the coin of reputation, for the ear of the king.[34] In 1957, caught between attacks on chieftaincy from above and *nkwankwaa* uproar below, the *Asantehene* made his peace with the CPP government. Asante's market in patriotism collapsed into the confederacy of intrigue out of which the kingdom had first been built. The CPP's cocoa-fuelled party machine, freed from the frustration of trimming chieftaincy under British eyes, set about building a people's developmental democracy with the familiar tools of enticement and intimidation of its opponents, supposedly the people's enemies.[35]

Buganda's relations with the rest of Uganda might well have been similar, but for a crucial difference. Britain had conquered Asante; Buganda helped Britain conquer Uganda. The kingdom's high politics, distributing land to support office, had earlier been sharpened by its chiefs' competition for imported guns and luxuries, and its commoners' fears of new burdens when domestic slaves were exported in exchange. Islam and competing Christianities, French Catholic and British Protestant, aided faction-formation. Britain got control, first over Buganda, by backing the winning, Protestant, side in a civil war, and then the rest of Uganda with the aid of Ganda guns and political agents. In 1900, during a royal minority, the ruling chiefs cemented this alliance with an agreement that granted them land by the square mile (*mailo*). Secure in property and British support, they could ignore the market for royal favour in which they had staked the loyalty of their followers, historically entitled to switch allegiance. Client householders now had to pay their protectors in forced labour on export crops. Property had trumped people.

In the 1920s a coalition of commoners and displaced office-holders called on their king, the *Kabaka*, now adult, to restore their ancient constitution. A single layer of British-backed chiefs had, they said, suppressed the competition in power that, as in Asante, had once allowed free Ganda a voice. Simply to be heard was colonial Africa's deepest cry.

The *Kabaka* met some of his petitioners' demands. Loyal populists, encouraged, later looked to him for further defence against over-mighty chiefs, Asian traders, and British rule. The constitutional battle inspired a prolific vernacular historiography. A patriot wrote to the London *Times* with a comparative eye: 'We are a nation. We are not a tribe, like the Welsh or the Scots.'[36] In the 1950s Ganda (p. 331) constitutionalism was more passionate than any Ugandan nationalism. The British made the *Kabaka* a hero by deporting him for opposing a unitary post-colonial state. On his return the old generation of chiefs was swept away and his *lukiiko*, or parliament, (fruitlessly) declared Buganda independent. Uganda's nationalism returned the compliment, anti-Buganda as well as anti-colonial. The British departed, leaving Ugandans to settle, in blood, the outstanding conflicts between Buganda and the rest. Popular royalism, asserting household rights against a bureaucratic baronage, faced a nationalism now armed with state power, determined to undo the regional inequalities of conquest. Ghana was fortunate that Asante was never Britain's friend.

Rwanda's history has been still more tragic than Uganda's. Here, a violent monarchy, European racial theory, colonial exactions, and changing missionary theology joined to nourish, first, aristocratic privilege, and then householder hope, a combustible contradiction that the colonial regime lacked the will to arbitrate until too late. By the 1950s it was widely believed that Tutsi military elite and Hutu peasantry had separate migrant origins. Historians now question that; nonetheless, the last independent king, Rwabugiri, had imposed new labour duties, seemingly on Hutu alone. German and then Belgian rulers were entranced by Tutsi elegance (thin-nosed like themselves), as also, initially, were Catholic missionaries. While the Belgians thought to lighten peasant duty owed to Tutsi patrons, still heavier colonial tax and labour demands were appropriated by Tutsi chiefs. The young deserted peasant households, preferring migrant labour to subjugation. After 1945 fresh missionaries, imbued with the new Catholic concern for the poor, encouraged a clerical Hutu counter-elite. Impending decolonization lit the tinder of revolution. The Tutsi minority (like Zanzibari Arabs or white Rhodesians) tried to lead Rwanda's nationalism in order to defuse its democratic potential, only to alert Hutu clerics to that very danger. Peasant jacqueries, especially in border areas, torched Tutsi dwellings; the king tried a counter-attack; the Belgians belatedly tried to douse the flames by overseeing the Hutu-ization of public life. A referendum finished the monarchy, doomed by its association with householder oppression in an era of promised freedom.

Elsewhere 'republican' patriotisms, fired by new conflicts within already unequal moral economies, could have similarly marked effects on visions of national citizenship. To take two pairs of contrasting nationalisms, in French West and British East Africa: the Ivory Coast and Kenya were 'conservative', their neighbours Guinea and Tanganyika were 'radical'. One could argue that class interest, not fear of fired-up patriotism, was sufficient cause for nationalists to be conservative, and more Ivoirians and Kenyans had started in rural capitalism than Guineans or Tanganyikans. Moreover, powerful settler minorities in the first two cases demanded harsher repression of African hopes after 1945, another reason for elites to control the unruly poor. But there was no inevitability here. Guinea's ruling party, Sékou Touré's Parti Démocratique de Guinée (PDG), was also

persecuted by the French for many years, and Nyerere's Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) was as alarmed as the British by popular protest against the second colonial occupation. The socialism both these leaders (p. 332) adopted was an ideology of control as much as progress, just like their neighbours' capitalism.

Nonetheless, fear of the anger aroused by the betrayal of moral economy certainly drove Kenya's conservatism. The terrorism of 'Mau Mau', 'famished eaters [of elders' authority]' among Kikuyu, 20 per cent of the population, stunned Kenya's nationalists, as did British counter-terror. Kikuyu dominated Nairobi's markets in skilled labour, slum housing, transport, food, fuel, and criminal opportunity. As in Buganda, property began to trump people. For senior Kikuyu, unfettered control of land became more politically profitable than client followings. In the late 1940s white settlers, similarly, revoked their 'squatter' tenancies, held largely by Kikuyu, in order to intensify their farming. Kikuyu juniors were gripped by fear of social extinction, unable to establish even client households, betrayed by patrons white and black. Redundant dependants, their claims on moral ethnicity were ignored. Lacking Buganda's constitutional remedy they turned to violence. Kikuyu split (like Zulu) between radical and conservative patriots—Mau Mau and the 'loyalists' who backed the British and inherited their power. Both agreed that ethnic citizenship rested on sweated self-mastery. Each blamed the other for loss of trust between patron and client. At independence Kikuyu leaders used state power to create a multi-ethnic alliance united only by a determination to ensure that the means to self-reliance, in property or employment, would answer to elite patronage, not client demand.

A less bloody, more complex, history lay behind Ivoirian conservatism. The coffee-planter patrons of the Parti Démocratique du Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) were shaken by the ethnic violence and youthful anarchy aroused by *la repression* of the late 1940s, when the French coerced the PDCI—with other West African parties—into breaking with the communists after the latter left the French coalition government in 1947. Guinea suffered still more than the Ivory Coast, yet the PDG held to a radical course, ending in 1958 as the only party to vote 'Non' to Charles de Gaulle's offer of autonomy within a French Community. The explanation lies in contrasts between societies rather than in ideological differences between leaders. Sékou Touré's conversion to the 'Non' was pressed on him by his party branches, dominated by trades unionists, memories of indigenous slavery, and educated criticism of local Islamic practices, not least with regard to women, who at times had led their men in protecting household survival. The Ivory Coast, by contrast, was a classic frontier zone in which big planters could still relieve popular anger by sponsoring forest clearance for cultivation. Here, class formation helped rather than hindered youthful household ambition; Ivoirian conservatives could enjoy a legitimacy that their Kenyan counterparts had forfeited.

But one cannot explain the benevolent despotism of Tanganyikan (Tanzanian) nationalism without considering its leader's thought. Looking to history for instruction, Nyerere misread it, romanticizing past moral economies as a chain of communalisms. As elsewhere, they had in truth embodied attempts to socialize inequality with vertical ties of obligation. Tanganyikans argued about how to modernize these obligations, more than

was tolerable to TANU, an unusually bureaucratic party, thanks to its origins in the Swahili-speaking lingua franca of towns. TANU's unitary, uniform, (p. 333) vision of nationhood was disputed by some in wealthier regions who, like Awolowo, favoured an ethnic confederation, while others in isolated areas hoped freedom meant tax-free statelessness. Some wanted to confine citizenship to propertied householders; more thought it should be unconditional for Africans but denied to South Asians, traders too easily portrayed as bloodsuckers. Men in particular worried about how to control power. Rural clans had had a known responsibility for their members' actions, and chiefs could be challenged if they failed to 'heal the land' or make rain, but TANU's officials had an institutional self-belief difficult to question. In towns women were shockingly prominent in the political theatre of protest. Such argumentative untidiness was what perhaps persuaded Nyerere to abolish chiefly hierarchy, as in Guinea, and to see the regimented modernity of *ujamaa*—resettled village socialism with public services—as the best means to restore to Tanzanian citizenship its communal virtue.

One can scarcely doubt, to consider a final set of relations between patriotism and nationalism, that personal commitment to the perils of guerrilla war must come mainly from a sense of duty to free one's *patrie*—to quote Senghor—from the shame and disorder of alien rule. However, contrary to Fanon's hopes, liberation war proved to be Africa's most divisive form of anti-colonial nationalism. Its military elites could become as distant as political party leaders. It was never a unifying experience, even in tiny Portuguese Guinea where Amilcar Cabral showed a practical concern for social democracy even during the struggle. Other movements, led with less care, made enemies as much as friends, not only because their supporters could suffer terrible retribution from incumbent regimes. Guerrilla loyalties in any case tended to be ethnic rather than 'national'. In a vast country Angola's fighters set out from three regional bases and never escaped their ethnic origins; civil war continued long after independence. The two main Zimbabwean movements became more 'tribal' over time. FRELIMO in Mozambique was more successful in generating territorial unity perhaps because, unusually, it despised African history, but it paid heavily for its modernist 'commandism' in peasant resistance after independence. Under the pretext of defending western Christianity against savagery and Soviets, the Portuguese, white Rhodesians and, striking beyond their borders, the South Africans were not slow to exploit these divisions but did not create them.

Guerrilla armies tended to become less politically sensitive, more militarily self-contained, as they neared the seizure of power. Local patriotisms, fortified by the histories of social and environmental healing voiced by the spirit mediums of past rulers, lost control over the boys in the bush. Many found warfare became so 'hot'—with increasing demands on labour and loyalty, but decreasing safety—that they became worthless slaves, denied the dignity of household autonomy, no matter who was for the moment in control. In Zimbabwe neither guerrilla army seized the state; independence was negotiated. The subsequent power struggle brought more systematic violence than the war for freedom.

One guerrilla veteran, punished as a dissident, complained, ‘We’d done our duty, we wanted to build our homes, what had we done wrong?’[37]

(p. 334) Earlier, in the 1960s, Sketchley Samkange, a middle-class Methodist, had enjoyed a liberal Zimbabwean nationalism that respected freedom of association and accommodated differences of view. Partisan war is different, for it has to impose absolute loyalty. South Africa was fortunate therefore that, by contrast with its contemporaries in Zimbabwe, Portuguese Africa and Namibia, the *Mkhonto we Size* armed wing of South Africa’s exile ANC was scarcely able to enter the country until after internal resistance had weakened the hold of apartheid and established a violent street democracy. The township wars of the 1980s, conducted under the multiracial umbrella of the United Democratic Front, toughened a citizenry against any threat of liberationist dictatorship, as did Africa’s strongest trades unions in Africa’s most industrialized economy. That was one assurance of post-apartheid democracy. The other belonged, unexpectedly, to the opposite end of the political spectrum, a ‘politics of notables’ that originated with the formation of the ANC in 1912; had always distrusted mass action, even in the 1950s Defiance Campaign; had turned Bantustan ‘self-government’ into an African political resource under its white alibi for domination; and provided Nelson Mandela, member of a chiefly house, with a network of family, school, and professional links with which to weave a governing alliance of local patriotisms. The ANC encouraged that diversity. Least remarked upon in the negotiations that led to majority rule in 1994 was the adoption of proportional representation with a party ‘list’ system, the electoral system most conducive to plural democracy in a ‘rainbow nation’ of many voices.

# Conclusion

In such contrasting circumstances did African patriotisms and nationalisms fight their own battles, informed by African history, to take over externally derived states. Nationalists saw their vocation as modernization, one word summarizing the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease. The unity needed for that daunting task appeared to require tight control when independence was won. All opposition was blamed on 'tribalism'. Political tribalism, a collective solidarity that silenced the patriotic self-examination of moral ethnicity, was indeed the surest means to assemble a vote-bank large enough to secure a share of the national cake. No wonder Samora Machel, president of FRELIMO's Mozambique, believed that 'for the nation to live, the tribe must die'.[38] But there were huge costs in gagging the constitutional debates that had informed local patriotisms; as a Shambaa proverb from Tanzania warns: 'All healers draw blood.'[39] As Awolowo forecast, and Samkange would sadly agree: '[N]ationalism knows no moderation: when it is in the saddle it rides hard.'[40]

African history has yet to make its own the states which hard-riding nationalists inherited. So far that history has been contradictory. Mandela, who observed thirty years of African independence before taking power himself, learned that respect for historically informed patriotic diversity was the road to national unity. Jomo Kenyatta, (p. 335) conservative believer in ethnic self-discipline, once called his country 'a kind of United Nations in miniature', but Kenya has not been spared the ravages of political tribalism.[41]

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## Notes:

(1.) I thank but exculpate those colleagues who have helped me: David Anderson, Gareth Austin, Bruce Berman, John Breuilly, Joel Cabrita, Holly Hanson, Emma Hunter, Paul la Hausse, Tom McCaskie, Derek Peterson, and Richard Waller.

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(10.) See Cemil Aydin’s Chapter 35 on pan-nationalisms.

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