

Movement Against Second Slavery

**FELA KUTI & THE DEMYSTIFICATION
OF NEOCOLONIALISM**

**DR. TEMITOPE FAGUNWA
OSUN STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH LECTURE
CENTRE FOR BLACK CULTURE AND
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Themes

- ▶ Introduction – Hypotheses on slavery
- ▶ Neocolonialism: Last Stage of Imperialism?
- ▶ Neocolonial Africa: Myth or Reality?
- ▶ Fela Kuti and the Making of Afrobeat
- ▶ The Politics of Afrobeat in Neocolonial Africa
- ▶ *Towards the Unity of Africa: The Praxis of Socialism*
- ▶ Conclusion – Fela and the Imagined Continent

Introduction – Hypotheses on slavery

- ▶ UNESCO – “Slavery is identifiable by an element of ownership or control over another’s life, coercion and the restriction of movement and by the fact that someone is not free to leave”.
- ▶ Slavery as an ancient mode of production is not peculiar to just a society, however like Asia, Africa did not experience it as a dominant mode of production.
- ▶ An important indicator of slavery is that of control.
- ▶ Kevin Bales has explained that a person or people can be taken into slavery by many paths.

Introduction – Hypotheses on slavery

- ▶ Thus slavery is a status or condition, not necessarily the means by which a person is removed into that state or condition of control.

Chain of Slavery Experiences in Africa

Domestic servitude (eg. Pawnship or collateral)



Chattel slavery (eg. Arab and Atlantic slaveries)



Contemporary slavery (forced labour, debt bondage, human trafficking, sexual slavery, child labour, etc)

Introduction – Hypotheses on slavery

- ▶ Chattel slavery, which implies the absolute ownership of humans, propelled the emergence of the 19th century industrial capitalism in the case of the Atlantic slavery.
- ▶ Contemporary slavery in Africa is tied to this experience.

Neocolonialism: Last Stage of Imperialism?

- ▶ Kwame Nkrumah – “Old-fashioned colonialism is by no means entirely abolished”.
- ▶ The states in Africa in reality have their economic and political policies been directed from outside.
- ▶ Neocolonialism implies the existence of state power without responsibility and exploitation without redress.
- ▶ Colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism are all expressions of capitalism and of bourgeois economic and political aspirations.

Neocolonialism: Last Stage of Imperialism?

Perpetrators of Neocolonialism in Africa



Internal forces

Bourgeois and puppet governments
Bourgeois economic class and intellectuals

External forces

International finance capital
Bourgeois imperialist countries

Neocolonialism: Last Stage of Imperialism?

Effects of Neocolonialism in Africa



Dominance of Foreign capital



Cheap labour



Production of raw materials

Neocolonialism: Last Stage of Imperialism?

GLOBAL CAPITALISM



**INTERNATIONAL
CAPITALISTS**



**AFRIKAN BOURGEOISIE
+
AFRIKAN RULERS**



**SUFFERING AFRIKAN
PEOPLE**



Neocolonial Africa: Myth or Reality?

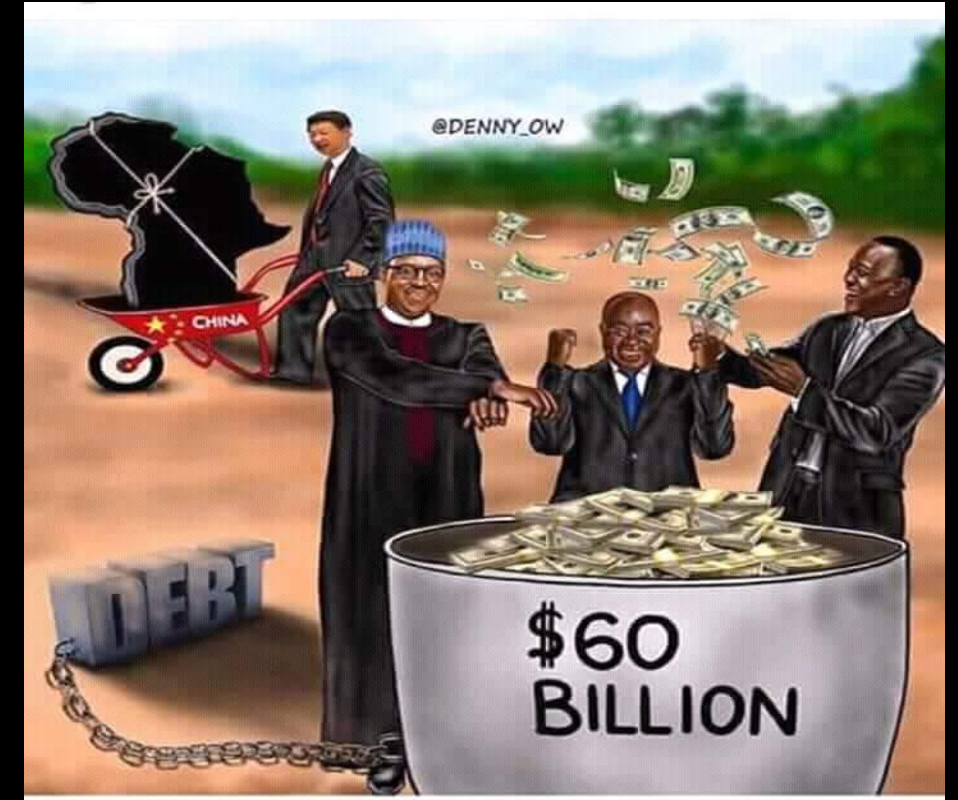
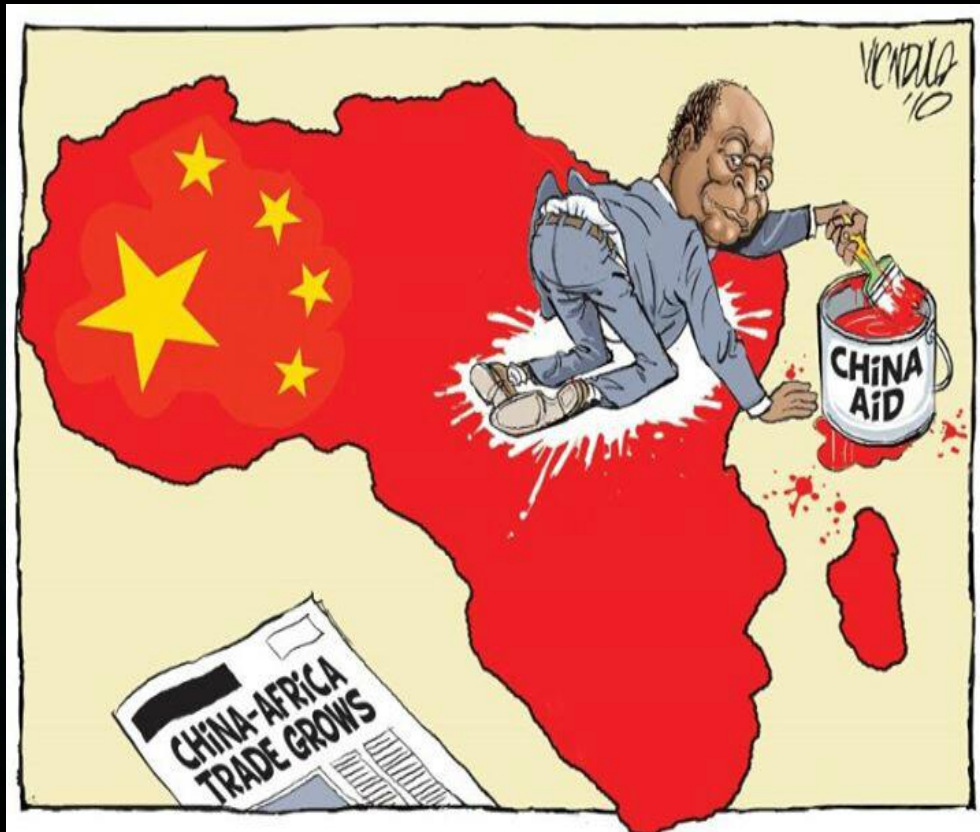
- ▶ On the 6th of October, 2022, the Nigerian government agreed to borrow N6.258trn to fund budget deficit.
- ▶ On the 11th of January, 2022, IMF urges Nigeria and others to devalue currencies, raise interest rates.
- ▶ A report confirms that Nigeria is to spend 92% of 2022 revenue on debt servicing.
- ▶ On the 21st of December, 2021, World Bank stashed out \$700m loan for water projects in Nigeria.
- ▶ IMF and World Bank dominates the financial policy of neocolonial African countries.

Neocolonial Africa: Myth or Reality?

- ▶ Geological Scandal – Congo in the 1960s homed 60% of the world's uranium, 70% of its cobalt and 70% of its industrial diamonds, yet the poorest country on planet earth.
- ▶ Today Congo holds about 65% of world's coltan used for cellphones, laptops and nuclear reactors.
- ▶ Nigeria as at the end of 2021 is the poverty capital of the world.

Neocolonial Africa: Myth or Reality?

- ▶ China is the largest bilateral creditor to Africa, thus holding at least 21% of African debt.



Fela Kuti and the Making of Afrobeat

- ▶ Olufela Olusegun Oludotun Ransome Kuti (later Fela Anikulapo Kuti) was born on the 15th of October, 1938 and died on the 2nd of August 1997.
- ▶ In 1958, Fela was sent to London to study medicine. However, he decided to study music at the Trinity College of Music.
- ▶ In 1959, he formed Koola Lobitos – a funky band that played a fusion of both highlife and jazz.
- ▶ In 1960 he got married to Remi Taylor and returned to Nigeria in 1963 as a radio producer at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation.

Fela Kuti and the Making of Afrobeat

- ▶ In 1967, Fela went to Ghana where he decided to combine highlife, jazz, salsa, Yoruba traditional music into what will become known as Afrobeat.
- ▶ In 1969, Fela took the band to USA where he met Sandra Isidore of the Black Panther Party. The encounter subsequently politicized Afrobeat.
- ▶ In 1970, Fela renamed the band to Nigeria 70 and then to Africa 70.
- ▶ *Why Blackman dey cry* has been classified to be the first in what will become a long series of radical tunes under the emblem of Afrobeat.

The Politics of Afrobeat in Neocolonial Africa

- ▶ In VIP (Vagabonds in Power) Fela Kuti exposed the backwardness of the African ruling class.
- ▶ BBC (Big Blind Country)
- ▶ ASOP – SAP (Suck African People)
- ▶ MASS (Movement Against Second Slavery)
- ▶ ITT (International Thief Thief)
- ▶ Choice of pidgin – aimed to side with the daily struggles of the oppressed.
- ▶ ODOO (Overtake Don Overtake Overtake)

The Politics of Afrobeat in Neocolonial Africa

▶ In BBC Fela went thus;

All African leaders/na hire dem hire eyes/na Oyinbo eyes dem rent/dat is di reason why/corruption dey/authority stealing dey – Puppetism at best.

➤ In ITT Fela reveals; (Capital flight/foreign capital control)

During the time dem com colonize us/na European man na him dey carry shit/many foreign companies dey Africa/carry all our money go

Towards the Unity of Africa: The Praxis of Socialism

- ▶ **Walter Rodney affirms that;** *“Socialism has advanced on imperialism’s weakest flanks – in the sector that is exploited, oppressed and reduced to dependency. In Asia and eastern Europe, socialism released the nationalist energies of colonized peoples; it turned the goal of production away from the money market and towards the satisfaction of human needs...it has eradicated...unemployment...and realized some of the promise implicit in Western bourgeois democracy by providing the equality of economic condition...”*

Conclusion – Fela and the Imagined Continent

- ▶ Africa Unite
- ▶ Pan-Africanism
- ▶ Defeat of Post-traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS)
- ▶ Defeat of puppetism and foreign influences.
- ▶ Free from the continuous dominance of the international finance capital