Growth of Nationalism in Africa.

The period after the two great wars of the 20th Century, that is, World War One and World War Two saw the steady rise of nationalism in Africa. Nationalism, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica, is defined as an, "ideology based on the premise that the individual's loyalty and devotion to the nation-state surpass other individuals or group interest. In the African context, nationalism can be seen as a move sought by the peoples of Africa in order to see the African continent acquire greater self-autonomy and free herself from the shackles of colonialism.

The following are some of the reasons for the growth of nationalism in Africa:

- **Participation in the World Wars:** African peoples were conscripted to join the armies of their colonial powers during both wars in order to fight off foreign occupation and dominance in different parts of the world. It is from this that African soldiers were inspired to seek for independence after seeing that even their colonial masters resented foreign occupation. The African soldiers played a vital part in the struggle for Africa's independence. For example, the Mau Mau freedom fighters in Kenya. Participating in the war also helped shatter the belief of White Supremacy, whereby African soldiers witnessed the death of fellow 'White soldiers' in the battlefield.

- **Failure by the colonial powers to compensate African soldiers who took part in the war:** African soldiers were greatly enraged and disgruntled by the latter's failure to compensate and recognise the crucial part played by the former in liberation efforts of the world from the Central (1914-1918) and Axis powers (1939-1945) respectively. They were angered by the discriminatory way of compensation where the White soldiers were favoured. This sparked anti-colonial/nationalistic feelings as they saw an independent Africa would guarantee them the compensation and recognition they deserved.

- **Education:** The Africans who had acquired colonial education were enlightened on the rights and the freedom of all men. This led to formation of an elite class of educated Africans who sought for the liberation of Africa and championed this cause throughout the world.

- **The Pan African Movement:** This was a movement that sought for the fair treatment of Africans and also advocated for the granting of independence to the Africa continent. This transnational organisation was able to gather a force of African elite, collaborators, and/or sympathisers who favoured its worthy cause such as Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta among others. Some of the leaders were also vital in the liberation struggle cause in their host countries such as Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya under the Kenya Africa National Union (KANU).
- **Independence of Asian nations:** African nationalism was on the rise after the African peoples witnessed the acquiring of independence by India and Pakistan from the British. They were inspired and also pushed for their independence.

- **Self Determination factor guaranteed by the United Nation Organisation:** The United Nations through its Charter guaranteed for the self determination of peoples without fear from discrimination and/or oppression. This motivated African peoples to push for independence hence growth of nationalism.
- **The rise of United States and Soviet Union:** The end of World War II saw the rise of a bipolar power system in the international system with the USA and USSR at the helm of control. They both favoured decolonisation of Africa but each nation had its own objectives. The USA favoured decolonisation as she saw a liberated Africa as a market for her goods and also a potential source of raw materials for her industries. She also sought to spread the Capitalist ideology in Africa. The Soviet Union on the other hand wanted to spread the Communist ideology in Africa. This motivated African peoples in their struggle for independence having received 'approval' from the superpowers to do so hence growth of nationalism.

- **Loss of independence:** The African peoples were angered by the loss of independence to foreign colonial powers. Moreover, the loss of their fertile land and being pushed into reserves (Bantustans- South Africa) where they were forcefully subjected to poor living conditions sparked and also fuelled the fire of nationalism in the African people.

- **Liberia and Ethiopia:** African nations under colonial rule were 'envious' of the level of independence enjoyed by Independent African states: Liberia and Ethiopia. This also led to growth of nationalistic feelings in Africa.

- **Urbanisation:** The growth of urban centres in colonial Africa offered an opportunity for Africans of different backgrounds to interact. It is in this way that people were able to share ideas of how they resented being under colonial occupation. This formed the roots for the rise and growth of nationalistic feelings, views and emotions in the host nations.

- **Unfair colonial policies:** The colonial powers subjected the host African peoples to unfavourable and/or harsh policies that created or generated resentment towards the system. For example, they were subjected to harsh and heavy taxation, forced labour, harassment which sparked nationalistic feelings among the people who saw that an independent Africa would guarantee them their rights and freedoms.