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Q7

The anti-colonial struggles in West Africa were led by the new elite of Western-educated Africans. Examine.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · GS I · 12 marks · History of the World

History of the world will include events from the 18th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, redrawing of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization, political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc. - their forms and effect on the society.

Core demand of the question

- The anti-colonial struggles in West Africa were led by the new elite of Western-educated Africans. Examine
- Cover Gold Coast, Nigeria, and French West Africa, and test the claim against chiefs, farmers, and unions
- Keep the explanation within a 12.5-mark length

Revision summary

Lawyers, teachers, and journalists chaired West African nationalist parties after 1945.

Nkrumah, Azikiwe, Senghor, and Houphouët-Boigny are the elite type, with different mass tactics.

Cocoa farmers, strikes, and 1948 Accra unrest show a wider social engine.

Chiefs could block or bargain, so tradition was not outside the story.

Elite leadership is accurate for the helm, not for the whole ship.

Flow diagram

Western-educated elite -> Parties press constitutions

Farmers unions veterans -> Mass pressure

Parties press constitutions -> Independence

Mass pressure -> Independence

Chiefs emirs -> Independence

Conclusion

- **Examine means:** elite leadership plus mass pressure, with Nkrumah as the type who was both scholarship boy and crowd politician.
- Compare British and French West Africa so the answer is not only the Gold Coast.

Western-educated Africans led West African anti-colonial politics in party, press, and constitution. The struggles themselves were wider: farmers, workers, veterans, and chiefs pushed, funded, and sometimes resisted that elite, which is why the statement must be examined, not swallowed whole.

Facts & figures

UGCC and CPP, Gold Coast

Elite **United Gold Coast Convention (1947)** and Nkrumah's mass **Convention People's Party (1949)** that took Ghana to independence in 1957.

Accra riots, 1948

Unrest after ex-servicemen were fired on, a turning point that radicalised Gold Coast politics beyond petitions.

Nnamdi Azikiwe

Nigerian journalist-politician whose newspapers and NCNC made him a face of southern nationalist leadership.

Léopold Sédar Senghor

Senegalese poet and évolué who led the path from French Union politics to Senegalese presidency.

Manchester Pan-African Congress, 1945

Meeting that gathered African and diaspora activists, including future West African leaders, around immediate decolonisation.